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TO MY FRIEND  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
*PRESIDENT*  
*ALL INDIA NATIONAL CONGRESS*



## P R E F A C E

ON two previous occasions, in 1915 and 1917, I had been asked by the Indian leaders to go out to Fiji, in the centre of the South Pacific, to enquire into the conditions of Indian indentured labour recruited for those islands. My friend, Mr. W. W. Pearson, accompanied me on the former of these two visits and we wrote a joint report, on our return, strongly condemning the indenture system as leading inevitably to moral degradation.

On my second visit I was obliged to travel alone and made a stay in the South Pacific of more than six months. The state of things under indenture was much worse than before, and it became quite clear that the whole system ought to be abolished as soon as possible. This was finally accomplished on January 1, 1920, when those still under indenture were at last set free. That date was a red-letter day in the history of Indian labour. For not only in Fiji, but in all the British colonies, Indian indenture was abolished. The system had become almost world-wide, and its abolition was world-wide also.

All this took place nearly twenty years ago, and in one sense it is past history. On the other hand, the after-effects of a long-established practice of this kind, which had produced evil results, cannot be cleared up in a day.

Last year, 1936, I was requested by the Indian community in Fiji to go out once more on an entirely different errand. For after the Indian labourers had been set free from indenture and the system had been brought to an end, citizen rights, on an education and

property basis, had been granted by the Administration. But these rights had been seriously threatened in 1935, and the Indian leaders requested me to come out in order to defend them. While engaged in this work, I spent some weeks in the Islands and went round to all the centres where Indians had congregated. In addition, I visited Australia and New Zealand. In this way, old memories were renewed and comparisons with the past could be made.

This book is primarily the result of that journey. For I found such an improvement since the old indenture days that it seemed necessary to me, as one who had witnessed both the old and the new, to write down my impressions; for there are not many things to encourage us in the world as it stands to-day!

There has been strangely little realization as yet, even in India itself, how far the emigration of Indian indentured labour had spread throughout the colonies where sugar is cultivated. To-day, after nearly a century, half the population of British Guiana and Trinidad has come from India originally. Mauritius is now almost an Indian island. Natal owes most of its development as the "Garden of South Africa" to Indian labour. Fiji, as this book will show, tells the same story. Thus, in every part of the world, Indian settlement has now become a permanent factor in colonial life. Everywhere we find the same frugal, industrious, law-abiding agricultural workers making up in different colonies a great part of the population.

Three questions of grave importance have come to the front as this Indian immigrant population has settled down:

- (1) The indenture system (as the first chapter will

show) has left behind it very serious evils which must rapidly be got rid of.

(2) The close relationship between the Indian settlers and the original population in each colony has to be carefully adjusted.

(3) The position of Indians born in the colonies, with regard to India, their mother country, must be defined.

It will be seen that these are not merely local questions, but ultimate problems which are similar to those that have to be faced everywhere, wherever any large body of mankind has changed its habitat. Strangely enough, and quite accidentally, a laboratory experiment of world magnitude has been attempted by India in these colonies and the experiment is not yet complete. Herein lies the fascination of the subject. For what has happened, owing to migration under indenture in the past, is likely to happen on a vaster scale in the future, when inter-communication by sea and air becomes far more rapid and cheap.

Ever since I went out to India, more than thirty-three years ago, these questions have been brought before me in a practical form. During the years 1913-1936, I have visited not only Fiji, but also nearly all the other colonies where Indians have settled. Everywhere I have received the warmest welcome, and have learnt at first hand what hardships Indians have suffered. Thus, a great part of my life has been occupied with these very problems. Yet hitherto I have written nothing about them, except in reports and newspaper articles.

It has been a great happiness to me to relate the narrative which is contained in this book, because it is, on the whole, a story of encouragement in face of what



appeared at one time overwhelming odds. Out of their own initiative, helped by important acts of the Administration (such as the education programme), the Indian settlers have made a striking advance. On the gravest issues, as they have arisen, the Indian Government has sided with the Indian leaders in their efforts on behalf of their fellow countrymen. Thus, on the whole, there has been a common basis of action. After the great anti-indenture campaign of 1915-1920 was ended in favour of the Indian settlers, there has been a united attempt at improvement. The Indians have struggled against enormous obstacles that seemed at one time to be insurmountable. But they have had the courage and faith to overcome them. For this reason, the state of things is much better to-day than it was twenty years ago. There remain, as this book will show, very serious evils, which have to be put right, and also disabilities from which Indians still suffer. *In some colonies these are greater than in others.* Nevertheless, things have, on the whole, gone steadily forward since the old days under indenture which are now, thank God! a thing of the past.

Other grave issues with regard to the Indian migration in the Pacific have arisen. The most serious has been the treatment of the Sikhs from the Punjab in British Columbia, which culminated in the incident of the "Komagata Maru." There are also wide questions relating to the "White Australia" policy, and to the cultural associations between India, China, and Japan. Since these have all come within the scope of enquiries that I have made personally, it seemed best to bring them into this volume. For I have travelled not only in the South Pacific but also in China, Japan, and North America on its western Pacific coast.

On three very memorable occasions I was invited by the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, to travel with him in these North Pacific areas, and he was the first to bring home to me the importance of the close cultural relation between Japan, China, and India.

In the year 1932 I was invited by the Chinese people to come out and help them in connexion with the Flood Relief work, which they were undertaking in the Yangtse Kiang valley. But at the last moment my plans and arrangements had to be cancelled on account of a crisis in India which needed my undivided attention.

At the very centre of Santiniketan, where Tagore has founded his Asram—a place dear to me as my own home—there was opened in April 1937 a Chinese Hall, where Chinese studies are being undertaken by Indian students, and Sanskrit studies are being carried on with remarkable eagerness by Chinese. This Hall has been built by the Chinese as a gift to the Indian poet who has taken such a deep interest in their country and has revived in modern times the old relationship between India and China. The founding of this Chinese Hall in India is an event of great importance in world history and I shall refer to its significance as bringing India once more into close cultural touch with the Pacific.

While the scholars and sages of China and India have met in this auspicious manner, the poor agricultural labourers have been undergoing until quite recent times grave hardships side by side under indenture, which led on to very great evils. It is true that the Indian emigrants have now become entirely free from these evils, but there are still in the South of China many who are being recruited under indenture, and are thus likely to suffer from the same fate. How far this

indenture system is still being carried on with regard to Chinese emigration I have no immediate means of knowing fully, but I would call the attention of Chinese social workers to the facts which I have related in this book.

I have ventured to dedicate what I have written to my friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the All-India National Congress, because he has been able to realize, most of all, the vast importance of these world issues which India has been brought up against in the Pacific. Furthermore, no other name at the present moment would give greater pleasure than his to Indians abroad as a dedicatory inscription.

My grateful thanks are due to Sj. Ambalal Patel and Pundit Vishnudeo, of the Indian Association, Fiji, for the help they gave me during my recent visit. I would also thank the Fiji Government and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company for offering me every facility. Mr. J. R. Pearson (I.C.S. retired) has given me much assistance. I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Kartar Singh of Vancouver, British Columbia. Lex Miller and Dr. Alexander Hodge were my good helpers in New Zealand, and Margaret Holmes and Lancelot Andrews in Australia.

C. F. ANDREWS

*June 4, 1937*

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# INDIA AND THE PACIFIC

## *Chapter I*

### THE INDENTURE SYSTEM

(i)

MORE than a century ago, a system called "indentured labour" was started in India, and allowed by the East India Company, whereby villagers in large numbers were recruited from Northern India and the Madras Presidency to go out to the tropical colonies and carry on there the same work, on the sugar plantations, which had formerly been done by slaves. For soon after the abolition of slavery these sugar estates began to fall into decay through lack of regular labour. A new system of labour was then devised, on the basis of a five years' indenture, during which a labourer was bound down to the estate manager in such a way that he could be criminally prosecuted if he left the estate. He was, in effect, a bond-servant.

Sir William Hunter, the historian, called the system "semi-servile," and such it was in its results. The grossest evil connected with it was the sex disproportion. For not more than forty women were recruited with every hundred men. In India, the whole method of recruitment was very unpopular. For recruiters roamed about the country, using all manner of fraud to attain their object. When one district rose against them, they went on to another. India is such a vast agricultural country that it was very long before this fraudulent recruiting became universally condemned. The recruiters were

paid so much a head for those they brought to the depot; and more was paid for a woman than a man. Just before indenture was abolished the amount paid for a woman rose as high as eighty to a hundred rupees, and every rascality was committed in order to get the money. I was called upon to carry out an investigation at first hand and therefore can vouch for these facts.

(ii)

Those who were thus recruited came from a normal, average agricultural village stock, as all the later history of this indentured labour emigration has clearly shown. For as soon as ever they were released and became free men, they proved their sterling merit in every part of the world. But under indenture their lot was pitiable in the extreme. The number of those who committed suicide, year by year, in every colony, proved this, since it is the rarest thing in India for a villager to take his own life. The suicide record of Fiji was worst of all, and that is why Fiji became the "test case," whereby the whole system was at last condemned.

It has been necessary for me to give a bare outline of these earlier facts, because they form the background of all that I have written in the first part of this book. On my two previous visits, in 1915 and 1917, the indenture system was in full force in Fiji. Soon afterwards, in 1920, it was abolished; and since then, the progress has been uninterrupted. I am writing about what I have seen; for I have been struck everywhere by the latent powers of recovery which these villagers of India have possessed within themselves, and also by the way they have been able to make use of it. The story that follows will show the further difficulties which still lie before them.

## (iii)

It is important to remember all through these chapters that Fiji is only one of many colonies wherein the system of indentured labour was practised on the old "slave" estates. British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Natal, Mauritius, as well as other smaller colonies, all adopted the same substitute of indentured labour from India, in place of the old slave labour, over a long series of years. I have seen in British Guiana, for instance, the old "barracoons," where the slaves used to live, turned into "quarters" for the indentured Indians. Indeed, it is true to say that the economic wealth of these colonies, which was derived last century from sugar exports, was built up out of this Indian labour.

Thus, during nearly a century in some of these colonies, and during half a century in others, while this system was in operation, many hundreds of thousands went out from India and a large number of these have remained and settled down. The approximate figures for those residing in these colonies to-day are as follows:

British Guiana . . .	140,000
Trinidad . . .	145,000
Dutch Guiana . . .	30,000
Jamaica . . .	20,000
Mauritius . . .	280,000
Natal . . .	160,000
Fiji . . .	85,000

Besides these, there have been, of course, many hundreds of thousands besides who have either died in the colonies or else returned to India. Their value as agriculturists has been widely recognized. For they



have clung to the soil in circumstances involving the greatest hardship. They have thus brought credit to India, their motherland, wherever they have gone, and they have remained in turn devoted to that country.

(iv)

With regard to the long and arduous campaign in India which resulted in the abolition of indenture, a few facts may be told here very briefly. Mahatma Gandhi, throughout, was the prime mover and inspirer of the struggle. In Natal, at Phoenix, he had lived very close to the indentured labourers and had shared in his own life many of their hard conditions. For he abandoned a thriving practice as an attorney, in order to become one with the poor. It was he who first brought home to Indian minds, in India itself, the vices inherent in the system. His friend and helper, Mr. H. S. L. Polak, did the same thing during visits which he paid to India, and also by his powerful pen. Mr. Gandhi inspired in turn Mr. G. K. Gokhale and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and induced them to take up the political cause of "Indenture Abolition" as their own.

In Natal Mr. Gandhi's greatest passive resistance struggle was carried out on behalf of these indentured labourers. But the final blow was dealt by him in India in 1917, through his anti-indenture campaign. In this he had the whole country behind him. Mrs. Besant led the campaign in the Madras Presidency. The Government of India in the end accepted the popular will and stopped all further recruiting. The last indentured labourer was set free on January 1, 1920, when the whole system was brought to an end.

One pleasing story about the abolition I would like to tell. Mrs. Jaijee Petit, of Bombay, led a deputation, including all the most prominent women of India, to the Viceroy—an event which had never happened in Indian history before. At the very same time, the women of Australia had made their own investigation through Miss Garnham, who went out to Fiji as their representative to find out the facts. She entirely condemned the system because of the hardship and misery that Indian women had to suffer under it. This led to the leaders in Australia bringing the evil, which was close to their own shores, before the notice of their Government.

In this manner the women of India and Australia were united together in carrying out a much-needed reform. It has always been to me a great happiness to remember that the women of these two countries were thus able to carry out, in their several ways, this humanitarian work.

(v)

The notes of my recent visit to Fiji and the Pacific were first jotted down at odd moments (chiefly in the very early morning) on an exceptionally busy tour in company with the Indian leaders of Fiji, and also while in close touch with the managers of the mills, where the sugar is extracted from the cane. The later chapters were written on board steamers during different voyages from shore to shore.

There is now a very much deeper interest than ever before in India itself concerning the conditions of Indians abroad. For this reason I am quite certain that what I have written out will be carefully studied

in that country. It will also be eagerly read in those colonies, other than Fiji, where Indians have settled in large numbers.

My greatest wish of all, if I may be allowed to express it, is that this book will be widely translated. For in India, in Fiji, and in other lands, there are highly intelligent people to whom English must always remain a foreign language. Therefore I should be more than grateful if what I have written could be well translated.\*

Among the people of Australia and New Zealand I found on my recent visit an increasing interest in Fiji. The reason is not far to seek. For after the great pioneer missionary work had been completed by Hunt, Cargill, Cross, and many others who had come out from Great Britain, the Methodist Church in Australia and New Zealand took up the task and carried it on with marvellous sacrifice and courage. This has resulted in the whole Fijian race becoming Christian. They have taken with a wonderful enthusiasm to this new-found faith in Christ, and have already shown sacrifice in their turn, going out to distant islands which are still cannibal. One of the most notable developments among them has been the widespread education of their children. More than 90 per cent are being educated to-day.

The same admirable pioneer work in education was started by the Methodists among the children of the indentured Indian labourers. Also in Suva and elsewhere, the Marist Brothers from a very early date took up, with gentleness and love, their full share in this work.

\* The permission of the publisher and author should first be obtained.

Thus, personal help was rendered to the Indian community in Fiji, by self-sacrificing men and women, at a time when such help was very sorely needed. Those who are Indian leaders to-day have told me, with deep emotion, what a debt of gratitude they owe to their teachers who helped them at a time when the future of their community was at stake. It is quite natural, therefore, that a friendly interest in Fiji should be widely felt both in Australia and New Zealand, not only towards the Fijian people, but towards the Indians as well. It is my earnest desire that this book may be read in these two countries and thus make the interest in Fiji which already exists more intelligent in its character.

Last of all, I hope that those Fijians who can read English fluently (as many are able to do) will be glad to study in these pages the thoughts of one who sympathizes with them so deeply as I do. For they have to think seriously about the modern problems that confront them and to understand the dangers to which they are exposed. They will find that I have written very much about the Fijians in these pages as a sincere well-wisher of their race.

While I came out to assist the Indian people, with reference to the threatened loss of their franchise, I soon discovered that this political issue was a part of a very much wider problem of friendship between three races—the Fijian, Indian, and European. In the long run every question resolved itself into one final issue, namely, how can three different races, so diverse from one another, find a common ground of friendship where they may meet together in peace, harmony, and concord. Only on that basis can the future happiness of Fiji be assured.

(vi)

This world-wide problem of racial adjustment—the “give and take” between the different peoples of the world who have suddenly come closer together—is surely one that in the present generation is going to tax all our powers of mutual good-will and human-kindness. We have to live near to one another in our outer lives, owing to the rapidity of modern communication, in a way that has never happened in the history of the world before; and the first result of this has been a very widespread outbreak of racial antagonisms. Yet we *have* to live side by side, as races, because the old boundaries are vanishing. We need, therefore, to learn entirely to forget those colour prejudices, which are tawdry, artificial things, unworthy of our civilization. We have to tolerate differences of outward manners and customs. Mutual courtesies ought to be learnt afresh, if civilized humanity is to be built up anew on a strong and lasting foundation.

Above all and beyond all, those of us who are Christians have got to understand that it is impossible to be true to Christ and at the same time to harbour in our hearts any prejudices of race and colour, which are altogether unworthy of our loyalty to Him who is our Lord and Master. For any true Christian, as St. Paul tells us, there “*cannot* be either Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but all are one Man in Christ Jesus.”

## Chapter 2

### THE OLD AND THE NEW

#### (i)

WHAT a difficult area to get about in the Fiji Islands are! I have just found this out afresh! An exceptionally heavy programme of visits and public meetings, from the moment of my arrival, proved a far greater strain on health and powers of endurance than I had anticipated when I started out on a tour round all the important centres. At last I had to succumb, and this experience has made me realize the exceptionally difficult conditions of tropical heat and moisture under which life is always being lived in the Islands, which are not far from the Equator. The distances, also, which seem so short on the map, involve a great deal of time spent in accomplishing one's purpose.

To get across to any of the outer islands and back by steamer may mean several days' delay, as well as the length of time taken up by the voyage itself while the small vessel calls at the different harbours on the voyage. Large parts of the interior are still without roads, owing to the broken nature of the country. In the smaller of the two main islands, called Vanua Levu, only a few miles of metalled road exist. Labasa, the chief town, is as far off as ever from Suva, with a very inadequate steamer service. Only the kindness of the Fiji Government in allowing me to travel by the *Adi Beti*, enabled me to make the journey at all in the time at my disposal.

Let me add a note here, that it would be a great help

and benefit to the whole Indian community if a road could be constructed right across Vanua Levu, which would shorten the long sea journey down to twelve hours. Since nearly a quarter of the Indians live outside the main island, this closer contact becomes a matter of great importance.

At the same time, it is a pleasure to record one change and improvement since I was in Fiji twenty years ago. The main island is now traversed by a road which connects Suva, the capital, with the north coast. It thus affords the saving of many days' journeying. I can well remember the weary voyage in the old *Adi Keva*. Days and nights used to be spent going round the island, inside the reef, with here and there a crossing of the open sea which could be very nasty when it was rough. Now, a few hours in a motor car, travelling overland, will get one to the same place.

No doubt this new road opens up new dangers. One of these will be the gravitation of people to the town of Suva. But nothing would be gained, and much would be lost, by allowing the old isolation of one part of Fiji from the other to remain. Even now in spite of the attractions of Suva, the bulk of the Indian population live on the land, and are likely to do so, if only conditions of tenure, both leasing and purchase, can be made at one and the same time easier and safer.

(ii)

In these notes, which I have written on the spot, statistical details have not been included, because the new census in Fiji had not yet been published. Therefore, I have thought it best not to quote the old census

figures which are already out of date. I have drawn my general conclusions from a comparison between what I have seen on this recent visit and what I saw before during the days when indenture was still in force.\*

Much that I shall set down is likely to provoke criticism, not only from Europeans, but also from Indians themselves. For I can easily see that in a small group of distant islands, such as Fiji, things are bound to run more and more in a groove, and it must be very difficult indeed to see things in their true proportion. My best help will be given by stating with the utmost frankness any clear opinions that I have formed, even though they may seem contrary to ideas generally held in the colony. For a fresh and active mind, giving an independent judgment, is perhaps the most necessary thing of all: and my own non-official position gives me that advantage. The value of these notes will not consist in the conclusions I have formed so much as in the fresh manner in which I have been able to view things.

(iii)

The time is obviously ripe for such new impressions to be given; for I can realize in a very startling manner that a turning point has been reached in the history of Fiji, and that the next ten years are going to make all the difference. Not only is the whole Pacific area changing rapidly, but also in Fiji itself the problems

\* Since this was written I have received through the kindness of the Colonial Office a copy of the new census. In the Appendix (p. 215) I have summarized its conclusions.



of land adjustment have to be taken in hand. They cannot be allowed to drift.

The three races—European, Indian, Fijian—have come to the cross-roads. What direction is each to take? Everyone with whom I discussed the question was of the opinion that the most critical time of all had now arrived. The crisis had been accentuated by the desire on the part of an important group of Europeans to scrap elections altogether and to leave everything in the hands of the Governor, who would *nominate* his own counsellors and advisers. The very fact that this retrograde proposal had been put forward before the Colonial Office in London by the Governor himself had led directly to a deadlock. It was on this account that I had been invited by the Indian people to come out, and I gave my opinion strongly against “nomination.”

But how the larger adjustment between the three races is to take place, and what it is to result in—that is the question which has now to be considered in all its bearings. A more congenial atmosphere is needed if the answer is to be given correctly. To “short-circuit” all progressive development by deliberately cutting out the principle of franchise altogether and making the Governor a small Dictator, has seemed to me, on the part of those who have put forward “nomination” instead of “election,” to leave out this wider perspective. It frankly and finally abandons the problem of progressive racial adjustment and aims at a static position. It would imply in the long run a perpetual European oligarchy in Fiji and would give no scope for the development both of the Indians and also Fijians as higher education advances.

When, however, the larger outlook is actually taken

and space is left for development, what is to be the point aimed at? How are the important land questions to be settled amicably? Is higher education to be given in separate schools or are the races to come together? Is the Civil Service, in all its branches, to be open to all races alike, or is it to be confined to Europeans? Are social amenities between the races to be definitely aimed at, as making for unity in Fiji, or are the present separate racial boundaries to be kept sacrosanct?

Questions like these must obviously be thought out afresh in a small area such as Fiji. No truly civilized and humane form of social life grows up by chance. Careful thought is needed at every stage and this book is intended to do some social thinking.

(iv)

If I may venture to write this, without imputing blame to any individual, I was much struck this time, on making enquiry, to find how very little attention had been paid as yet to these vital problems of racial and social adjustment. It seemed to have been assumed, in a haphazard manner, that things would right themselves, even though serious mistakes (such as the sex disproportion under indenture) had been committed in the past from which Fiji had hardly yet recovered.

To take one example, to which I shall refer again later on, I found the good Marist Brothers in Suva almost in despair because they were not allowed to take some bright Indian boys into their Matriculation class along with European children, although there was room for them and no one objected. This rigid racial prohibition was being enforced in spite of the fact that it was contrary to all precedent in Australia

and New Zealand, and also in other islands of the Pacific, such as Hawaii.

If the whole matter had been carefully thought out and this racial decision, which ran altogether contrary to British Constitutional theory, had only been taken as a last resort, the situation might have been temporarily acquiesced in. But it was as clear as possible to me that the question had not been thought out at all, and that in this matter, as in the matter of indenture, a fatally wrong decision had been taken.

The more I pondered over an incident like this, which set my whole mind in a ferment, the more I realized that Fiji in the past had somehow got into a backwater. Though to-day the new currents of social and political life were sweeping forward in independent countries like New Zealand and Australia, Fiji was still hugging the shore of its own sheltered existence rather than coming out boldly into the main stream of human affairs. Yet every day the full tide of life around it was advancing in other islands of the Pacific.

(v)

Very many times, during my stay in Fiji, I have been struck by the meagreness of the news which reaches the islands from the great world outside. The vast social and economic changes which have almost revolutionized our own generation seem only to have touched the fringe of Fiji. The great Pacific liners come and go, bringing glimpses of the bigger world outside, but Fiji remains intent on its own concerns and therefore unable to review them in relation to what is happening all around.

Yet every day mighty forces are gathering power

along the borders of the Pacific, which must vitally affect Fiji. Very soon, this favoured group of islands, so remarkably situated by Nature, as a kind of advanced outpost of Australia and New Zealand, must become a centre towards which many imperial ambitions will be directed. Fiji cannot possibly remain isolated, because it is the last great landmark in the Pacific before the two southern continents of Australia and New Zealand are reached. Not only will its naval and commercial value rapidly increase, but its "air" importance is likely to grow even faster still. Already Trans-Pacific air routes are being marked out and Suva is one of the most obvious ports of call.

With a good wireless station at Suva, it ought to be easily possible to offer a full daily supply of news and also to broadcast it throughout the islands to every homestead, without any large extra expense. Yet the service of news supplied to the Press is entirely inadequate compared with the importance of what is at stake. The result is that the smallest local questions are given an undue prominence and the world perspective is lost.

It is necessary to dwell on this at the outset, because it at once strikes the observer and at times disheartens him. Coming, as I have done, directly from the grave anxieties of Europe and the East, where everything is at stake, and responsible judgments must be formed on great world issues, it seems quite wrong to leave the younger generation in these islands with hardly a single idea concerning what is happening close at hand in the Pacific, and also with little news about the whole world in revolution. Trifling things were cabled out: cricket scores gained headline news; but scarcely anything reached us about what was happening in

India, China, or Japan. The crisis which Europe was passing through could hardly be understood or followed in Fiji.

Everything tends to lose its true proportion in such an atmosphere of unreality. Small events, that are near at hand, including local gossip and rumours, receive an altogether exaggerated place in daily life. The results are disastrous.

Meanwhile, the modern Powers in Europe, Asia, and America are feverishly searching the map for new points of vantage in the Pacific, where harbourage might be found in times of war or a new aerodrome might be constructed. Every now and then we hear of a national flag being raised on some hitherto neglected atoll or coral reef. For it is a commonplace among statesmen of repute that the next struggle for supremacy between the Powers is likely to include the Pacific.

Anyone who has watched the growing importance of Honolulu, which lies to the north of the Equator in the Pacific, with Pearl Harbour as its naval base, can hardly doubt that Suva will hold soon the same position in the south. But if this is certain to happen, what about the racial population? For of far greater importance than armaments will be the presence of a contented and economically self-sufficing people.

Therefore, decisions made to-day concerning racial relations in Fiji cannot any longer be isolated from the larger and wider world issues. Modern history needs to be studied with large maps: and every day world events are pointing towards these islands as one of the centres of world power.

(vi)

Such facts as these have not yet received sufficient attention. Even the Colonial Office, at Whitehall, which has a reputation for taking far-sighted geographical views, has singularly failed as yet to realize Fiji's strategical importance. Nor has the India Office had any wider vision. What is still more strange, the leading statesmen of Australia and New Zealand seem hardly to have realized as yet that Fiji is the bastion chosen by Nature herself both for the air and naval defence of their own shores.

If we draw out the comparison with Honolulu just mentioned, we shall notice at once the immense pains that the United States have taken, not only to make its defences secure, but also to make its people prosperous and contented. There is a mingling of races there even more intricate than that in Fiji. But the wide-awake Administration has already sought out, through concentrated study and research, the solution for its own problems.

It would be of no small value if one or two of the administrators of Fiji paid a visit to Honolulu and saw things for themselves. For instance, it would be at once apparent how far behind Fiji is in its own education programme, and how backwardness will still continue so long as the higher education of a small number of European boys apart, in separate schools, eats into the funds that ought to be used for the whole population of the islands.

Again, commercially, it would be seen how the Hawaiian Administration has insisted on the development of other industries (such as the pineapple), besides that of sugar, so that the Island group in the

North Pacific should be able to keep its economic independence.

Last of all, such a visit would quickly show the value of higher wages being given to intelligent workmen, from whatever race they are sprung. The minimum wage is far above that in Fiji, and skill in modern industry in consequence has rapidly increased.

Where both the climatic and agricultural conditions are so similar, north and south of the Equator, it is obvious that much might be learnt in Fiji from an experiment so near at hand. There should be no difficulty at all in gaining this information, for ocean liners traversing the Pacific pass on direct from Suva to Honolulu, and vice versa. Yet few take the trouble to compare the conditions in each island group. I have met here and there those who have lived for a time in both places and they have commented on the backwardness of Fiji; but their voices have not yet received the public attention they deserve.

## *Chapter 3*

### TWENTY YEARS AFTER

#### (i)

By far the strongest and best impression I have carried away from this, my third visit to the Fiji Islands, is the advance made in the last twenty years by the Indian population. After the indenture system had been brought to an end, things seem to have gone steadily forward.

What is most satisfactory of all is to note that instead of the economic position deteriorating after the change was made from the old to the new, it appears to have improved. The managers at the different mill centres have been eloquent about this fact, and though in the early days of the world depression conditions at one time became very critical in Fiji, now it would seem as though the worst is over, at least for a number of years; for as long as the present imperial preference continues, there is not likely to be a decline. It is true (as I was given to understand) that some crisis in the world sugar market may still arise, or the present preference may be suddenly withdrawn; yet what is visible to-day to the naked eye is sugar cultivation everywhere along the fertile borders of the Islands.\*

Clearly the heavy overhead charges, when Europeans themselves were the sugar planters, directing and controlling Indian indentured labour, were too great for

\* The recent World Sugar Conference in London appears to have fixed different quotas for each sugar-growing country, and thus to have made provision for the future.

•



the industry to bear. They could only be met on account of the miserably low wage of five shillings and sixpence per week which was paid to the indentured labourer who did the cultivation. Obviously, the best work could never be obtained under conditions of that kind. It meant something very little removed from slave labour while it lasted: for it was all bound up with compulsion.

Now, however, the European middleman has been eliminated. The free Indian himself is the planter. He cultivates his own sugar-cane as a tenant of the C.S.R. Company. Therefore the industry has been placed upon a much sounder economic basis.

Morally, there can be no comparison between the old and the new conditions. The Indian homesteads scattered over the land prove this and the happy faces of the Indian children. Again and again, as I went up and down the country, I thanked God for the improvement which had taken place.

Yet all is not well even now; and at each centre where Indians congregated to meet me the difficulties of tenancy and leasehold were constantly brought up before me, which showed how unsettled things were in spite of the immense industry of the Indian agricultural population. I took note of these things and asked questions, and have every desire, as far as it lies in my power, to see them righted.

(ii)

It is true, for instance, that the Indian cultivator, even to-day, can never hope to possess the *freehold* of the land on which he has spent a whole lifetime of laborious and unceasing toil. This in a sense is unfair

as well as short-sighted. He is a tenant at will, bound down under stringent conditions: he is not a peasant proprietor as he ought to be. Even when he obtains, with great difficulty, a lease from a Fijian tribe, his tenure is comparatively short: he spends money extravagantly in getting his lease renewed, and sometimes fails in the end. These hindrances will be fully explained later.

Nevertheless, in spite of indebtedness, in spite of insecurity of tenure, in spite of a thousand other evils, the advance made from the semi-servile conditions under indenture to the present state of things has meant a triumph of character whose value is very hard to over-estimate: for the change that I have witnessed has not only given good economic results; it has also provided a new social structure.

What has encouraged me most of all has been to see the family life being built up again on its old religious foundation and to find these religious sanctions still holding. By far the greater part of the Indian community is Hindu. The higher moral standard now reached has been due in a very great measure to the reforming efforts made by the Arya Samaj and also to the return to the old religious sanctions of Hinduism through the Sanatan Dharma Sabha. One has only to see the bright faces of the children and the spotless cleanliness of the homes to realize what has happened.

Outwardly, the very wide extension of sugar cultivation at once met my eye. It was far beyond all my expectation. Account must be taken of the fact that I came out at a season of the year when things were looking at their very best. The sugar-cane was ripe for cutting. But after taking all this into account, the sight was one to make glad the heart of man. It was

far in advance of what I had seen when I used to trudge up and down the same sugar belt in earlier days. I had also many chances of watching the people when they were assembled in great multitudes; for often over two thousand people came to the meetings. Again, I was able to visit the schools. Even though I missed the full school session (because it was holiday time), the children flocked to see me in their school-rooms and playgrounds. Therefore I had abundant opportunity of making a comparison, and I have stated what I saw.

(iii)

Yet there was one anxious thought that kept running through my mind, about which I shall have to write at length. For it haunted me continually and would not let me go. It came uppermost during a visit to Levuka, where I had also gone on my previous tour in 1917. At that time, I had found there a very flourishing colony of "free" Indians who had passed out of indenture and settled down to trade. They had built up their prosperity out of the copra industry.

There used to be a long row of shops and houses running all along the sea front. The whole air was penetrated by the somewhat disagreeable smell of copra. Everyone seemed busy and thriving.

But when I visited Levuka this time there was not a shop left. Very few Indians were resident. Levuka was almost deserted because of the depression in the market.

Suppose—I could not help thinking—that the sugar industry met with the same fate. What a downfall there would be! Was there no other industry immediately to take the place of sugar, if this should occur?

(iv)

When I made detailed enquiries on this subject, I found that the profits on sugar in Fiji depended entirely on the imperial preferences which had been given by Canada and Great Britain. Australia had only given preference to sugar of its own, grown in North Queensland. It was a closed market.

There were other factors, also, which complicated the issue, and about these I could get very little reliable information. They seemed to be "trade secrets." There was at one time the dangerous competition of Java sugar. This Java sugar had now been driven out of the Indian market by a tariff wall. Where did it all go to? I found that the C.S.R. Company, in anticipation of hard times coming, had been prospecting in India itself concerning conditions in that country. Factors such as these seemed to point to an unstable situation in Fiji.

Yet here was this intensely industrious and hard-working Indian agricultural population being driven by force of circumstance to sink every asset in sugar, with the certainty that if sugar failed ruin would stare them in the face.

It was true that agriculture all over the world was still suffering from the economic depression, and therefore it was something to be thankful for that the recent hard times had been got through so lightly in Fiji. Nevertheless, one could not avoid going back again and again to that empty shore front at Levuka and wondering what would happen if "sugar" fell below the cost of production in the same way as copra.

(v)

The great advance in the area of sugar cultivation in Fiji, owing mainly to Indian industry, has been all the more noticeable to me, because when I have been recently to other countries where Indians have been settled, I have not seen the same prosperity with regard to sugar.

For instance, when I visited British Guiana in 1929, I found the whole colony in the throes of a distress so deep that Indian agriculturists were wandering about the streets of Georgetown, coming in from the district because the sugar companies were no longer able to employ them. Some of the best "sugar" land had been sold to Indian farmers for rice cultivation, because sugar at that time had very little market value. Since that date, the same imperial preference, which has helped Fiji, has helped British Guiana also; but it will be easily understood how constantly my thoughts turned back to scenes like those I had witnessed only a few years ago in British Guiana, when I saw this extended sugar cultivation in Fiji. Would a further turn in the wheel of Fortune destroy the whole cultivation which I now saw before me? Would some new economic crisis compel the C.S.R. Company, in spite of its reserves, to shut down some of the mills? If so, what was left? It is a dangerous practice (to quote an old proverb) to "keep all the eggs in one basket!"

(vi)

On showing these notes to Indian leaders in Fiji, they pointed out one important correction. The outward appearance of prosperity conceals behind it a burden of indebtedness which almost every Indian has to bear.

I found this to be the case and would add that the insecurity of the present tenure of land has made it impossible to obtain on it agricultural loans at a low rate of interest. Yet loans of some description are almost a necessity in farming.

Here is a problem which the best minds in the world have been unable to solve. Yet much has been done in other countries; and Denmark has come nearest to a solution.

The Fiji Administration has hitherto made little attempt to find out a method to deal with their own indebtedness problem. With regard to private loans, the law is still far too much on the side of the usurious creditor. Some effort, at least, ought to be made, with Government help, to encourage agricultural banks and co-operative credit, and at the same time to make things hard for the bad moneylender.

There will be many criticisms still to offer, both with regard to the Government policy and also with reference to the C.S.R. Company's methods, and I shall offer them freely and frankly: but at the same time I wish to be equally frank in heartily commending the improvements I have witnessed. I can fully appreciate the business foresight which has carried the company through one of the darkest periods in modern economic history.

(vii)

What has given me most pleasure of all has been the fact that the Indian cultivators have improved their lot chiefly by their own initiative. As soon as ever a fair chance came they took it. From the moment that the dead-weight of the old indenture was lifted they began to recover. The houses which they have now

built for themselves are entirely different from the old kerosene tin shacks which were common twenty years ago. These no longer disfigure the landscape. Their removal is itself a witness of the change.

On all my journeyings among Indians abroad, I have never seen such a complete transformation. It reveals a remarkable power of initiative. Those who have passed through this period on the spot cannot realize the change like one who comes from the outside. The struggle must have been such an uphill one as to make the progress at the time almost imperceptible. But, in my own case, the conditions that I found under indenture were so branded on my mind that I could never forget them. For many months I used to wander up and down on foot among the Indian labourers, sharing as far as I could their lot with them. Therefore, when on my recent visit I had gone over the same ground and seen the difference, I could hardly believe it!

The sight of the well-clad and cleanly-dressed men, women, and children along the roads in Fiji to-day reveals to the whole world that the Indian villager has only to be given a fair chance for his amazing habits of thrift and hard work to make him one of the finest cultivators in the world. He shares with the Chinese this quality.

What has equally struck me is the fact that the Indian has not left religion in abeyance. From the moment he became free he began to build it up again. Thus my admiration for the deep religious background of Hinduism, when set free from trammels and impediments, has greatly increased. For it has been this clinging to *dharma* (religious duty) which has saved the Indians in Fiji. The same may be said of Islam also.

On my two previous visits, the one phrase used was that *dharmā* had been ruined. The fact was glaring. It was true. But the recovery has been equally astonishing and the splendid schools built by the different religious bodies with Government aid are filled with healthy, bright, and physically well-developed children.

Let me take, for instance, a sight which I witnessed at Samaboula. There were girls in the Arya Samaj school, ranging from six to fourteen years of age, who were being taught by Indian women teachers. The beautiful *sari* was the dress worn, and the feet were all bare. On the blackboards were lessons in Hindi. Each day begins and ends with prayer. While I was present the children sang to me their Hindi *bhajans*. A little further on was a Gurdwara. The orthodox Hindus have built their own Mandir. There was a Government school for boys. We also passed a mosque, where the children were reciting the *Quran*.

Such sights as these were almost unknown on my former visits. For then, religion was hardly taught at all, except in the Methodist Mission and Marist Brothers' schools, which deserve all praise for what they did in those days gone by when education was at its lowest ebb. I could not help contrasting these new Indian efforts with the feeble attempts that were being made before to keep religion alive in the old days. The new education now given in Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharma schools and also in Mission and Government schools has already covered 42 per cent of the Indian boys and 20 per cent of the Indian girls. This is only the beginning of things, and it is hoped before long to make the Indian community wholly literate, as the European and Fijian communities are. But think of twenty years ago! What a change!



## *Chapter 4*

### THE C.S.R. COMPANY

(i)

My notes now carry me on to some very important matters, chiefly within the Colonial Sugar Refining (C.S.R.) Company's own control, where certain changes appear to me to be necessary. To these, therefore, I would venture to call special attention. They deal, in the first instance, with conditions which may lead to the spread of disease.

Fiji to-day is amazingly healthy. There is practically no malaria, although the anopheles mosquito is found there. There are also comparatively few cases of water-borne diseases, such as typhoid, dysentery, etc. Cholera is entirely unknown. Yet I have been told on good authority that the state of things round the company's mills, where the old "lines" are still in existence in certain areas, may cause the spread of disease if allowed any longer to continue.

(a) My first recommendation would be that at every mill centre where Indians are congregated, the old "lines" should be completely demolished as quickly as possible. For they cannot help but bring back a painful memory of the past, which ought long ago to have been forgotten. I have given to the General Manager in Sydney my own suggestions and I have a great hope that at no distant date this necessary reconstruction will be done. My own preference is for semi-detached cottages in place of anything of a "barrack" nature.

The most important point, however, to insist on is the provision of a complete drainage system with a flush lavatory and latrine apparatus of a simple character. This should prevent the outbreak of epidemics in the future as nothing else could do, and it should be undertaken at once. Along with houses built on a new model there should be planned a market at each centre carefully provided with shelter. Here again the sanitary arrangements are of the utmost importance.

(b) Since the labourers' quarters close to the mills are an integral part of the company's property, there should be much more careful attention paid to their outward appearance. Without any over pressure, but rather by persevering effort, a pride in neatness and cleanliness might be fostered: for this neatness is really innate in the Indians who have come to Fiji. There should be encouragement everywhere of neatly trimmed grass plots: the erection of semi-detached cottages near to one another: a pleasant, shady market with a covered shelter. Such things as these may indicate some of the directions in which effort might be applied.

(c) I have made careful enquiry about the rate of the daily wage at the mills and would suggest a new scale of wages, which should start from a minimum much higher than the present rate and be increased according to the type of work done. If an Indian workman proves his capacity for higher work, he should be paid accordingly.

(d) In Labasa, nothing less than a "Campaign against Hookworm" is needed: for it has eaten into the Indian population. I noticed the difference in appearance among the Indians round the mills; and when the doctor told me the high rate of hookworm

infection, it was easy to understand the reason. I have given suggestions which have come from my own practical experience in India; but again, the first question that arises in my mind is how far can a satisfactory latrine system, with flush apparatus, be carried out in an area such as Labasa. I was very deeply impressed by the parting words of Dr. Harper, at Lautoka, advocating the immediate installation of a whole system of pipe-line fresh water, and a flush lavatory system, in all the populated parts of Fiji. Only in this way, he said, could Fiji keep much longer its comparative immunity from epidemics. It was a pleasure to me to find that the C.S.R. Company have already been to the fore in this matter; and I would impress upon everyone in authority who may read these notes that herein lies the safety of Fiji.

In such a matter as this, I would venture to appeal to the District Medical Officers to throw the whole weight of their expert authority into the scale in favour of larger measures being taken.

(e) The all too obvious contrast between the quarters on the top of the rising ground, at each mill, where the European management resides, and the sordid "lines" at the foot, where the poor labourers live, ought to be made less glaring. It reminds me of that medieval picture in a hymn I used to learn in childhood:

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate.

It also represents a form of race and class superiority which is objectionable from every point of view. For if there is one thing that needs to be obliterated in Fiji, it is racialism in any shape or form. In a small

group of islands, there is no room for the direct encouragement of mutual racial dislikes.

A far-seeing company must realize that the old days of semi-servile labour on a racial basis are entirely gone. Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, which are closely related to the whole C.S.R. Company's system by various preferences, are all progressive countries in labour matters and will judge the company's success by its large improvements in labour conditions. It is, therefore, not only wise but politic to abolish, along with the old indenture system, all those relics of feudalism which now belong to the past. It would, therefore, be of great importance, while carrying out the reconstruction round the mills, to bring to an end, at the same time, anything that savours of racial distinction together with ugly class differentiation between rich and poor.

(ii)

The time appears to be long overdue for the revision of some of the company's clauses in their tenancy system so that they are less burdensome to those who are working under them. There is also needed greater fixity of tenure. Wherever I went in the sugar districts, the same complaint was brought to me concerning the burden of some of the company's tenancy restrictions. The Indian farmers were between the horns of a dilemma. Either they were obliged to go through the long, expensive process of obtaining a short lease from the Fijians, or else they had to become tenants at will of the C.S.R. Company and endure all the company's regulations.

If the land in Fiji is compassed about with too many

penalties and restrictions; if the cultivator, after years of arduous toil, finds himself unable to pay the money he has borrowed in order to carry on his sugar cultivation, then his children will have no incentive to continue their father's work. They will take up some other occupation. Very great care will be needed, in the days ahead, to attract the younger generation to the soil. As Fiji develops, there will be large openings for skilled technicians, and the old love of the country, which is so deep in the Indian heart, may be lost.

I have before me the following complaint from Sigatoka, which sums up much that I have heard:

The C.S.R. Company sub-leases its lands to the Indian tenants under a special licence for a period of ten years. Every tenant has to comply with the company's wishes: otherwise he is given notice to quit. In that case the C.S.R. Company does not pay any compensation for his substantial loss. If a tenant is compelled to vacate his land he does not get any bonus for the improvements he has made. The company itself values the crops and buildings and pays to the ex-tenant who is obliged to accept what is given. The tenant cannot borrow, for he cannot give any security to the lender who refuses to advance money without it. The tenant cannot plant rice on any corner of his land. He cannot work for any employer even if there is nothing to do in his own field.

I have not been able to go through these several items in order to find out the company's answer to each one of them, and I have quoted it as a specimen of many complaints that I have received; but it surely might be possible, with satisfactory tenants, not only to sweep away petty restrictions of this character, but also to offer more generous terms of tenure. For, if the conditions on which the company's "tenancies"

are held are too irksome, there will be a movement away from the soil which might be disastrous. What seems most needed is a far-sighted policy which aims in every way at making the sugar cultivation attractive and affords to those who are eager to rise a means of advancing, step by step, to better conditions.

This would clearly imply better *living* conditions round the mills—the important posts being made open to Indians as soon as they qualify for them. It would also mean, for those Indians who are on the land, abundant opportunities for grazing cattle to supply milk for their home and children. For if there is one thing that will satisfy the Indian farmer with his lot, it is the possession of cattle which he can call his own. This love of cattle is innate in every Indian villager, and it is one of those cherished sentiments which Fiji is able to satisfy.

“What prevented A,” I asked, “from taking a job at Suva?”

“He did not like to be separated from his cattle,” was the reply.

It must be remembered that many of those Hindus who remain on the land are vegetarians. But milk and butter are both included in their vegetarian diet. The splendid physique of so many of the country-born children in Fiji, as compared with those in India, is due

- (a) to their complete freedom from malaria.
- (b) to the abundance of milk in Fiji.

(iii)

The claim for greater freedom of action and the spirit of adventure have now come to stay in Fiji, however

much the older generation may shrink back. This adventurous spirit is not likely to be set at rest unless the pathway is opened up within the company's own management and routine. The younger generation, which I met and greatly admired, will not remain passive and accept patronage. They are, therefore, much more difficult to deal with. The new education which they have received has opened their eyes to a larger world. They see a select number of their own schoolmates gaining scholarships and going abroad to University life in Auckland or Sydney. All this has a wholesome aspect and it should be treated with the utmost sympathy, tact, and consideration.

For the C.S.R. Company, it obviously means far greater difficulty in retaining labour at the mills and getting good tenants for their freehold estates. A wise and far-sighted policy is needed, whereby a lad can go high in his profession if he is determined to work hard and use his brains. If this leads in the end to the employment of fewer Europeans, then the question will have to be faced, as it was faced before, whether a gradual replacement of Europeans by Indians and Fijians is not needed in a tropical climate like Fiji, where a European cannot live and bring up a family except at a prohibitive expense.

(iv)

The three staple foods which all Indians require are rice, pulse, and milk. *Dal* is a kind of pulse—a nitrogenous food, containing protein, which is found in India in many varieties.

It would be of great value to the small householder if he were able either to grow each year a small patch

of rice, or could get it fresh, unhusked, near at hand and do the husking himself. It might also be found that one of the varieties of pulse could be used, as a nitrogen-producing crop, to be ploughed in as manure in order to improve the sugar land. The hillsides should afford splendid pasturage for cattle.

As the world is moving to-day, a new struggle may at any moment be impending in the Pacific. No risk of a sudden shortage of food, owing to a blockade, ought to be taken. Few lands have been so wonderfully favoured by Nature as Fiji. With its tropical sun and abundant rainfall on a rich volcanic soil, it should be easy to grow all the rice and vegetables needed for home consumption. Either, when the land lies fallow, rice might be grown in alternate years (as the Dutch have done for many years past in Java), or else some land peculiarly suited for rice cultivation might be set apart. For ordinary prudence would suggest that this matter of self-sufficiency should be taken in hand and meanwhile an embargo placed on rice that is still imported. Health, as well as safety, points that way.

From the health point of view, we are being shown more clearly each day by research in food nutrition, that fresh grain is superior to that which is old and stale. The polished rice; which is exported, has lost much of its freshness in transit, and cannot be compared with the newly-husked rice that has been grown on the spot.

I was able to prove, for instance, to the satisfaction of the Health Officer in Trinidad, that a certain common complaint among the rice-eating Indian labourers, in that island, was due to the stale imported rice which they were eating, instead of the fresh rice which came over from British Guiana. Another in-



teresting fact is told by Steffanson, the Arctic explorer, that lemons and vegetables when kept for several months, even in the "cold storage" of the Arctic climate, lose their anti-scurvy value.

Such new facts as these, which are coming to light every day, show us the need, not only on the grounds of security, but of health also, of relying on fresh home-grown products wherever they may be easily obtained. The fact that rice is proving also a popular food among the Fijians, ought to lead to its wider cultivation in the colony.

With regard to areas suitable for rice cultivation, there are obviously first-rate alluvial soils. The only difficulty is that this land is all taken up by "sugar."

(v)

It has been already pointed out that there might at any time be nothing less than an economic collapse in Fiji, if some change in imperial preference took place, or some other adverse swing of the pendulum of world trade reduced the price of sugar to an uneconomic level. That is the constant fear. The problem of Java, with its forty million people suddenly deprived of its huge Indian market, shows how precarious under modern world conditions these single big industries are. The people of Java cannot sit idle. They must go on producing. What is to become of their sugar? Where will it now find a market? This question cries for an answer.

So long as the preference lasts in Canada and Great Britain, these dangers may seem remote. Nevertheless, prudence surely points to a subsidiary industry being the only safeguard for Fiji, if the worst should come

to the worst. Since the Indian community is most nearly affected, it cannot view the future prospect with indifference. But apart from this, the immense strategical importance of Fiji makes this economic problem a vital one for the Administration boldly to tackle.

A pineapple industry was attempted some time ago, on the lines of Hawaii, and at one point in its chequered history it seemed likely to succeed. But, in the end, it was obliged to close down for want of further capital. Now, gold has been discovered in small quantities, but up to the present there seems hardly likely to be a "boom." For many reasons, little reliance can be placed on "mining." Yet, the rich volcanic soil of Fiji remains undeveloped year after year and it would seem almost a tragedy if nothing was done to make the colony both self-supporting in the way of food and at the same time able to maintain a subsidiary industry, connected with the soil, that might help to prevent a disaster, if the price of sugar should go down. For it is obviously necessary to have something to fall back on in a time of need. Mining in a small group of islands must be always precarious, and it may lead to many moral evils. On the other hand, the volcanic and alluvial soils of Fiji are a "gold mine" themselves with all the healthy open air agricultural life attached to their cultivation.\*

\* Since this chapter was written, the good news has reached me that the C.S.R. Company have undertaken to start a pineapple industry such as I had suggested above.

## Chapter 5

### THE FIJIAN PEOPLE

#### (i)

It may be well to turn for a moment to the Fijians and enquire how they stand as regards the sugar industry and the Indian cultivator.

First of all, as far as I can gather, there has never been hitherto any economic rivalry between the two races with reference to sugar cultivation. If the Fijian has ever taken up "sugar" on his own account, it has been due to his watching closely the Indian at work and seeking to imitate his methods. For he is not a born farmer as the Indian is.

In the second place, he is essentially a member of a tribe. Individual effort, of a persistent character, does not come easily to him. He has never been accustomed to work as a unit, but always in a community. He does not start with the idea of individual, private property, but with the conviction that property is tribal, communal. The initial difficulty between the races is considerable, because while the Indian (who is an individualist) takes very easily indeed to *personal* ownership, because he is used to it, the Fijian can only think at present in terms of *tribal* ownership.

It is true that, in Suva, unattached Fijians work for their own salary and make use of their own money. They have learnt, that is to say, to be individualists. Yet even here, we are told, they still owe their duty to their tribe and village, and are ready to pay their due, because the tribal loyalty is very strong indeed

and the authority of the chief still goes for the most part unchallenged.

All this tribal socialism had been familiar to me more specifically in Africa, where it is the basis of all life and moulds all human thinking. Also on my previous visits to Fiji I had close touch with the Fijians, and had studied their old traditions. Tribal custom still takes up the major portion of their lives.

A very slight but significant incident may bring these tribal loyalties home to the Indian and European mind. When I was speaking in the great church at Suva to a Fijian Christian congregation, Ratu (Chief) George, the son of the Paramount Chief, Ratu Popey, was my interpreter. At one point in the service a young Fijian Christian from the congregation had to give out a message from the pulpit, and in doing so had to pass Ratu George. As he went past him, he stooped down and did obeisance, and when returning repeated the same act. There, even in a Christian church, where all were equal before God, he could not for a moment forget his duty to the son of the Paramount Chief. I have seen the same gesture on the part of every member of a village as they came forward into the village chief's presence.

Let me take one of the greatest of all difficulties which this tribal duty involves at a time when an Indian farmer wishes to get the lease of a few acres of land. This special plot may belong, for a certain season, to one individual who is cultivating it on behalf of the whole tribe. The Indian who wants the lease must first win over this individual Fijian to agree to lease the land to him and not to somebody else. He will do this by means of a present. But his consent is not enough. The question of the lease must be

brought before the chief of the village and then before the whole tribe.

The Indian, if he wishes to succeed, has to give presents all round and not seldom a feast in the bargain! A weary round of seeking favour with the tribe begins. Money must be uselessly spent and wasted. In the end, the Indian may have accomplished nothing because of some tribal objection. Added to all this original trouble of bartering and bargaining, whenever a lease has to be renewed, the whole process may in this manner have to begin all over again!

In spite of all these difficulties, the Indian has somehow managed to get his own way in the past: and when once the whole tribe consents, the Government usually raises no objection. But, every now and then, there are heart-breaking disappointments, and the system of giving presents leads on to bribery and corruption.

(ii)

Few people have ever worked harder than the Indian cultivators, who have now entirely superseded the Europeans. Their habits of thrift, industry, and perseverance have in the end prevailed. They are recognized all over the colony.

What is more remarkable still, these great qualities have begun to tell upon the Fijians and have created in them a desire to cultivate sugar on their own account. Up to quite recently, it was supposed that this was impossible. It was thought that the Fijian, working under the tribal system, could never be brought to undergo the intense individual strain and constant energy that sugar cultivation involves. In some ways, the very fact that the Fijians own the soil has told

against them, because it tempted them to remain comparatively idle and draw the rents from their Indian tenants. The whole tribe would live in this manner, with few wants of their own, employing their time in cultivating a patch of *taro* for their own use.

But the industry of the Indian farmer fired their own ambitions. Very gradually they have begun to attempt what the Indian has so successfully undertaken. As might be expected, the earlier efforts ended in failure. But some few have persevered. Here and there I saw a field of sugar-cane planted by the Fijians themselves which looked well cultivated.

When talking things over with the different managers at the mills, I received contrary judgments concerning the capacity of the Fijian as a sugar cultivator. One, I well remember, had no use for them at all. They were nothing, he said, but a nuisance: for whenever they tried to cultivate sugar on their own account, it all "went to pieces." The only chance, he added, was where the Fijian hired the Indian to do the work.

But other managers gave a more favourable verdict. They said that the Fijian was improving; and the truth lies probably in that direction. For even though the beginning of this new Fijian agricultural venture may be small, compared with the large areas now cultivated by Indians, nevertheless they have one asset always with them: they own the land. What has already happened seems to point forward to a time when much of their soil will be cultivated by the Fijians themselves. If so, their moral and physical welfare may both be preserved: for unless they put their hands to the plough, in the midst of a thriving industry all around them, they are bound to degenerate.

## (iii)

Here is a life and death matter for the whole Fijian people. The importance of the issue can hardly be over-estimated. For even after the magnificent moral start which they have made, under the impulse of their Christian religion, the Fijian race may still relapse if ever circumstances go against them. In the course of a little more than half a century, they have risen out of a state of cannibalism and savagery to their present position as an educated community, bent upon higher things. But merely to live in idleness would be fatal to them. Therefore, as one who has learnt to love the Fijian people, while I have gone among them, for their high qualities of courtesy, generosity, and tribal loyalty and devotion, it has been to me one of the most cheering sights to notice from time to time, on my present visit, as compared with the last, that they are beginning to cultivate sugar-cane on their own account and to undertake other difficult tasks.

Such concentrated industry, however, does not come easily to the Fijian as it does to the Indian. Nevertheless, with the example of the Indian always before him and often with his friendly help and encouragement, one Fijian here and there has made a start: and in things like these, it is the first step that counts.

Yet at present there is one obvious defect which may retard further progress. For the Fijian has not as yet been able to link up this sugar cultivation closely with the tribal system; and it is here that the trouble lies. For just when the sugar cultivation needs concentrated attention, he may be called away to do other work for his tribe, and his loyalty to his chief makes immediate obedience necessary. Experiment alone can show

whether the strain of working, day in, day out, under modern conditions at one single thing can be fitted in with the whole tribal routine. It has also to be seen whether the concentration involved may not be too great for these less hardy and enduring races.

(iv)

It may now be stated with some confidence and assurance, that after fifty years of experiment under many adverse conditions, the close contact of the Fijians with the more thrifty and industrious Indians has proved a benefit and not an injury to the Fijians themselves. They have watched and imitated the patience with which the Indians have worked their own cane fields, and have learnt very slowly to follow their methods of cultivation. At every turn they have been helped also by the overseers of the C.S.R. Company, who have taken a great interest in them. It cannot be repeated too often that the whole future of Fiji now depends on whether the Fijian with his magnificent physique, but hitherto untested staying powers, is able to keep up with the Indian farmers and perform, as they do, hard and continuous labour. Is there a point beyond which the Fijian cannot go? Is the sugar industry too laborious for him? Might not some other form of cultivation be more suited to his nature?

I must confess I have grave doubts as to the wisdom of employing none but Fijians in the new gold-mining area which is opening out beyond Tavua. I do not like the racial distinction which it implies; and I also fear for the Fijian race, if quantities of gold are found and a gold rush suddenly takes place. I have seen far too much of the deterioration of fine native races in



Africa to look with complacency on what may happen in the future in Fiji, if the Fijian race becomes tempted to leave agriculture and to seek for high wages at the mines.

In time, as the population increases and the struggle for existence grows more intense, the two races, the Indian and the Fijian, are not unlikely to develop on far more equal terms, each race receiving something from the other and also giving something in return. There are dangers, of course, on both sides: for evil habits may be learnt as well as good; and I have been anxious this time, to speak frankly, about the spread of *yangona* drinking among the Indians. Though somewhat harmless as a drink in small amounts, it saps mental and moral energy when taken in large quantities, and it at last becomes a habit that cannot be kept under control. Every effort ought to be made at the outset to prevent what might be a harmless custom becoming a most harmful addiction.

(v)

At this point I would call still further attention to the danger, if the present single industry of sugar cultivation encroaches on all the best land in the colony and employs all the best talents. I have returned to this subject, because the problem of the Fijian, as an agriculturist, may ultimately depend upon it. For the further I went through the islands, the more doubtful I became about sugar cultivation being best suited to the temperament of the Fijian. These island races have to be preserved, not recklessly destroyed. They have to get through these transition periods without breaking. If it is true, therefore, that the sugar

industry brings too great a strain and pressure on them, it is a thousand pities not to find out at the earliest possible moment in what direction their true talents lie. It might, for instance, be discovered that the lighter work of pineapple cultivation, which seems the nearest alternative, would exactly suit the Fijians and that with their clever hands they might become expert in canning and packing for export.

While the Administration is rightly spending great care and large sums of money on the agricultural training of all the races, it should also be studying in an expert, scientific manner the human factors which have made the Fijian what he is to-day—in some ways singularly fitted by temperament for the life in the islands where he was born: but, in other ways, unfitted for the clash with other races and easily depressed when brought face to face with entirely novel conditions. No subject, in the South Pacific, needs more careful study among those who have power in their hands and can, to a certain extent, shape circumstances according to their will. One of the saddest things in modern human history is the extinction of the aboriginal races. In Tasmania, for instance, the native race has entirely disappeared and there is the danger, which is now imminent, that the Australian native race will also be extinct in another fifty years. The same sad fate has nearly overtaken the fine race which used to inhabit North America. Of all the islanders in the South Pacific, the Fijian has shown, along with the Maori, the greatest capacity for progress and enlightenment, together with intellectual ability of no mean order. Nothing should be done to put a stumbling-block in the way of its further development.

## *Chapter 6*

### THE WILL TO LIVE

#### (i)

ONE of the strangest phenomena in human history, which has not yet been thoroughly explored, is the survival and decline of different races. The Pacific Islands have had the unfortunate reputation of affording instances of what has been termed "race suicide" on the part of those islanders who have declined almost to the point of extinction before the ruthless and disorderly invasion of the white race and other races also.

Fiji itself, at one time, began to show all the well-known marks of a declining population. The Fijian birth rate diminished: its death rate increased: epidemics of a mild type swept off thousands: the people themselves began to lose hope. At one point in its recent history nearly one quarter of the Fijian people were swept away in a single year by an attack of measles. Mothers then began to despair of rearing their own children and the whole people seemed to be losing heart. It has been noticed that when, among these non-immune races, courage declines, the end is likely to be near.

#### (ii)

Up to the present, as I have tried to explain, the presence of the Indian immigrants in Fiji has acted rather as a stimulant of the "will to live" among the Fijians than in the opposite direction.

For the law of survival or decline seems to run in the following direction: As long as the immigrant race, which is able to till the tropical soil and endure the heat, remains inferior in numbers to the indigenous race, it acts as a stimulus and for a time at least the indigenous race keeps up the struggle to survive. But when the hardier immigrant race becomes superior in numbers as well as in energy, then the indigenous race begins to give up the struggle.

Looking back to the years 1915 and 1917, when I visited Fiji before, and tried to study this very problem, I can well remember how the universal opinion had been reached that the Fijians were a declining race with very little survival value in comparison with the Indians who were rapidly increasing.

"In a very few years," one medical officer told me, "the Indian population will have turned the scale; and then the decline in the Fijian population will be even more rapid than it is to-day. The infant mortality among the Fijian children is excessive."

But the indentured immigration from India was stopped just in time. No more Indians were brought in as labourers to swell the numbers. This itself seemed to give heart to the Fijians who were intelligently watching the course of events. I can still remember some talks that I had with young Fijians. They were emphatic in their demand that the Indian immigration should be stopped. They wanted as many Indians as possible shipped back to India. This talk alarmed me by its bitterness and desperation.

Then a strange thing happened. The influenza epidemic towards the end of the war struck all the races in Fiji with the force of a hurricane. European, Indian, Fijian, went down before it. I heard all about

it from Miss Priest and Miss Dixon who had gone out at my request to help the Indian community. When the epidemic was at its height, they were nursing all races alike and standing between the dead and the living.

But one thing stood out clearly in my mind. The Fijian race, though badly hit by the epidemic, was able to weather the storm far better than was ever expected.\* It did not succumb to it, as it did to the epidemic of measles, at an earlier date. It came out of the furnace of affliction tried and purified seven times in the fire, and has been a hardier and healthier race ever since, with obviously a higher survival value.

The result has been that, at the late census that has just been taken, the advance figures show that the death rate is declining and the birth figures keep high. The ratio to the Indian population is well maintained. The Fijians now number, roughly, 98,500, while the Indians stand at 85,000.†

Therefore, there is no sign as yet of "race suicide"; but just the reverse. If only the Fijian mothers would more generally copy the Indian mothers and feed their babies on milk instead of *taro*, which they cannot digest, the ratio might continue to improve. For the one weak spot among the Fijians to-day is the high infant mortality. If that were corrected the happiest ratio of all between the two races might be established—each race steadily increasing its numbers, side by side, with no overlapping.

\* See the new Census Report, Appendix A.

† See the Appendix on the new census, page 215.

## (iii)

It has been an immense satisfaction to those who took active part in the struggle to abolish indenture, that the victory came at the right moment. For if the system had continued, and many thousands more had been brought in as labourers under indenture from India, then assuredly the delicate balance between the two races would have been upset, and in that case the Fijians might actually by this time have become a "dying race."

None would have regretted such a thing if it had occurred more deeply than the Indians in Fiji: because there has been very gradually formed a traditional friendship with the Fijians and nothing would have pained the Indian leaders more than any marked decline in the Fijian population.

If I may give my own impression of the Fijians whom I have met during this recent visit in 1936, I could still trace an anxiety at times with regard to their own failure to keep pace with the Indians in certain ways, especially in industry. Yet at the same time, there was not the slightest trace of bitterness or jealousy that I could detect. They would, of course, be discouraged if the Indian numbers increased more rapidly than their own, or if there was any reopening of immigration. They would also feel discouraged if they really declined in agricultural efficiency and had to give place altogether to Indian farmers. But neither of these two great issues has as yet been settled against them by the trend of recent events.

They are rightly proud concerning their advance in education, which is truly remarkable. They are also fervent in their devotion to the Christian faith which

they profess. The singing at their church services is always a joy to hear—their voices are so beautiful and their sense of harmony so perfect. In higher education it would surely lead to good if the different races in Fiji mingled together as they actually do in Hawaii. But this will not be brought about in an effective manner until the European children are taught to associate freely with the other races in games and in other directions.

The factor which has given me most satisfaction and hope has been the recovery of the family life among the Indians. This is now helping the Fijian to take more interest and pride in his own children. The Indian father's love for his children, shown by his constant care and attention, is noticed by the Fijian father. The Indian mother's great anxiety in Fiji to send her children neat and tidy to school is noticed by the Fijian mother. The home life of an Indian family is seen best in the country districts, where most of the Fijians reside. All these different aspects of Indian life are watched by the Fijian and have helped him in his own home life, just as I have seen the Indian family life help the Baganda in Central Africa and also help the Zulu in Natal.

(iv)

One point is of great interest. I have often been told by Indians themselves in Fiji, how the remarkable singing of the Fijians at their church services and their evident devotion to their religion have impressed them and made them value more the place of religion in their own life. Again, the sight of the Fijian children going each morning to school and returning each

evening has implanted in the Indian community the desire to have their own children educated.

I have been told also how, in Fiji, the Indian Christians have formed a bridge between the two races. Indian leaders have often found their first close contact with Fijian chiefs through Indian Christians, who knew the chiefs well as Christians. In this way the Indian Christians have taken a far more prominent part in public affairs than they have done in India itself. One finds, for instance, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians sitting down to a common meal together and sharing one another's hospitality far more often in Fiji than in India.

This friendly relation once established by hospitality easily passes on further. The Fijian chief, for instance, takes delight in offering hospitality to those who visit his village. His friendly approach to the Indian leader in each district is warmly responded to with a courtesy which is mutual. Many Indians have picked up, from childhood onwards, enough of the language to be able to converse in it; and though the daily contact is not very close (for the bulk of the Fijians live in their villages apart) yet whenever some festive occasion offers, contact is established, especially with the village chiefs.

(v)

No single case of inter-marriage between the races has ever come to my notice.\* It is not even thought of or contemplated. There is evidently a natural law which seems to act automatically in such a way as to prevent this. Therefore, there are never any com-

\* I have been told that there are one or two such marriages, but what I have written sums up correctly the general situation.



plications, or "half-caste" problems, between the two communities which might embitter social relations.

There is, in Suva, a Young Fijian Association, with its motto "Fiji for the Fijians." During the present visit, I did not come into touch with it; nor did I hear from the Indian leaders much about it. As far as I am aware it has no hostility to the Indians as foreigners. Yet such ideas must have had their place from time to time in the young Fijian mind; and I can well remember, in 1917, the stir made by one named Apolosi (if I remember rightly) who started a commercial company which was to be run entirely by Fijians.

But at least 90 per cent of the Fijians still live in their villages, keeping up their tribal customs, with a closely knit, self-contained life of their own. Among these I was not conscious of any sense of rivalry with the Indians. On the contrary I found always pleasant, friendly relations on either side.

(vi)

It was deeply interesting to me to find that the name of Gandhi had penetrated these villages in the interior of Fiji. I spoke by means of an interpreter to a chief in a distant part of the country, far away from the towns, who asked me about Gandhi. His fame had reached that far. No other Indian name was known, but Mahatma Gandhi's reputation is evidently unique.

On another occasion, I found that a chief had fully appreciated the fact that the Indian and Fijian stood much in the same relation to the European. "After all," he said, "we are both coloured people. Why should we not be friends with one another?"

Remarks like this made me feel that the Fijian is

reaching out to a world view. He is no longer local in his politics. Evidently there is an increasing sense of revolt from the convention of being obliged to do and say exactly what the Government tells him. He is growing up and does not like either to be patronized or protected. How far this goes beyond the chiefs, who carry on all the business, it is hard to judge.

On every occasion, wherever time permitted, after coming to a new centre, I would visit the Fijian village and get into touch with those who lived there. Each separate village has its own chief and his retainers are round him. Besides this, the Fijians came in considerable numbers, out of curiosity, to the Indian meetings where I spoke in Hindi. They were very eager to shake hands with me as I went away. The friendly manner in which this was done is not easy to convey in words, but it taught me, perhaps, more than anything else to appreciate to the full the cordial good-will, and good humour also, which exists between the two races.

(vii)

It has been a very great joy to me to note in all this that I have set down, from time to time, the contrast with my last visit, when I had an uneasy fear that relations might at any time get strained.

Then, the indenture system had confused the Fijian's mind, and had led even to the danger of hostile relations. There is no need to do more than mention this fact now, by way of contrast; for it is all gone and past and done away with, I hope, for ever. Yet, when I remember some of the things I heard on either side in those earlier days and then recall the pleasant memories of to-day, I cannot be too thankful.

I would go further and suggest that the leading Indian Christians have a great part to play in cementing friendship: for they stand nearer to the Fijians, as Christians, than other Indians do, and therefore their own responsibility is greater. Up to the present, there has been far too little intercourse between the Christians of the three races. This ought not to be the case and it shows a weakness in the form of Christianity which has been presented. At least, at all the great festivals of the Christian Church there ought to be affectionate and kindly greetings between those who are one in Christ.

(viii)

At the end of this last visit to Fiji, a series of Christian meetings were held in the Town Hall, Suva, to which all races and creeds were invited. The central purpose was to unite Christians of all denominations in one communion and fellowship together. Large gatherings attended every night and also came to special services at church on the intervening Sunday. There was very great joy among us all that racial unity had thus been more closely established.

Hindus and Muslims were present at these gatherings as well as Christians. It seemed transparently evident to us all that in this direction of unity between the races lay the future of Fiji. Only thus could Fiji take its rightful part in solving the problem of the Pacific. What was also made more evident was that the Christian religion, to which Fijians, Europeans, and many educated Indians belonged, had a very important part to play in bringing about a much closer union of the races.

## *Chapter 7*

### THE LAND QUESTION

#### (i)

THE question of the possession and occupation of land, together with the Indian rights as contrasted with those of the Fijians, constitutes by far the most difficult problem which has to be faced in Fiji at the present time. If it is not taken in hand at once and a solution found, it may lead on in time to a racial bitterness that would ruin all the good work done in the past to bring the races together.

The British Administration in Fiji, directed by the Colonial Office in Whitehall, has given lavish promises, first to the Fijians themselves and then immediately afterwards to the Indians who were induced to come out as labourers. This has not only created a confusion of interests, but also by a dual promise led to great unfairness. It would have seemed almost impossible that such a thing could have happened under a responsible British Government, with such a long experience as the Colonial Office and the India Office combined. But such a thing has actually occurred, and there is no escape from the conclusion that a blunder of the first order has been made.

For the same British Government, in 1874, promised faithfully to the Fijians that their rights of ownership should be preserved, and then promised to the Indians, in 1875, that those who had finished their indenture should have rights "in no whit inferior to those of any other race." This was the dual promise to which I have referred above.

## (ii)

We British appear to have a singular fatality in this direction of dual promises. Palestine is a glaring example at the present time. We "muddle through": but the blunder itself arises from confused thinking. Meanwhile, heart-burnings are created.

It has been a standing wonder to me, in Fiji, to see how in spite of endless legal tangles over land leases the mutual relations between the two races have remained so peaceable and friendly. It speaks well that this has been the case. At the same time, it would be very short-sighted optimism to allow these complications to go still further without drastic effort to disentangle them. For just ahead lies the most critical time of all, when the short leases obtained twenty years ago are beginning to fall in and the Indians are making desperate efforts to get them renewed. The whole atmosphere is full of grievances and wrongs.

Probably more than 80 per cent of the land, whether occupied or not, is owned by the Fijians and held as tribal property. About 20 per cent of very valuable alluvial soil is held either as Crown grants or freehold property by the C.S.R. Company and others. A very few fortunate Indians have obtained some of this freehold property, but what they own is a mere decimal fraction of the land of the whole colony. Such is the general situation.

## (iii)

The large area of tribal land held by the Fijians is, of course the real issue.

The Government has protected it and preserved it

and safeguarded it by regulations which tie up the whole process of purchase or sale. No tribal land can be alienated except by the direct permission of the Governor in Council. The Fijians themselves have the disposition of their own leases, but up to the present these leases have not been extended beyond twenty-one years.

If each lease belonged to an individual, the process of obtaining a lease might be simple. For the bargain could easily be registered and Government approval obtained. But there are complicated rights, under the tribal system, which bring into the bargain also the tribal chief and all the members of the tribe. These have to be satisfied before the lease can be finally settled.

The first approach is made to the individual Fijian by the Indian. They go together to the District Commissioner and the Indian deposits £10 for the survey, lodging at the same time his application for the lease in writing.

After that the trouble begins. The District Commissioner forwards the application to the Fijian District Council, which meets and decides whether it is willing to surrender on lease the control of tribal land. Its decision is communicated to the District Commissioner, who forwards it with his own comments to the Commissioner of Lands. He, in turn, submits it to the Native Leases Board and thereafter for final approval to the Governor-General in Council.

Meanwhile, before the tribe surrenders control, a long process of what can only be called blackmailing goes on by individual members of the tribe till the poor Indian applicant is bled almost white. Many pitfalls still exist during the process of surveying the

land, and further bribery may be needed here also. In the end, even when the lease has been obtained, with incredible difficulty, it has only run, as a rule, for twenty-one years; and when the renewal comes the same wretched process has to be gone through all over again with the same likelihood of blackmail, bribery, and corruption.

Let us consider one of these cases of renewal which in the next ten years are likely to be very frequent indeed.

The Indian farmer gradually finds himself drawing near to the day when his lease expires. All the best years of his life have been given to this plot of land and he has immensely improved it by his exertions. His house, where his children were born, is built upon it. He has now reached middle age and the last thing he would wish to do is to begin all over again on new land. So he moves heaven and earth to get his lease renewed on favourable terms. But the whole tribe is on the watch, eager to get its share of anything that is going at the time of renewal. While in ordinary circumstances the Indian farmer is careful to the last degree about spending money, now, in his panic at the thought of losing his lease, he begins throwing money away like water, while the tribe holds him, as it were, in the hollow of its hand and squeezes him dry. This is a very unpleasant picture and all leases are not renewed in such a drastic manner, but still it is too common to brush it on one side.

(iv)

Hundreds of such leases are likely to fall in during the next ten years: for most of them were obtained after

1917, when the indenture system began to draw to an end. A crisis, therefore, is very rapidly rising which may cause a worse disturbance of the public peace than a strike or labour dispute. The same miserable process of blackmail and bribery is likely to go on more than ever before unless the whole system of leasing is changed.

The Administration, with admirable intentions, has been anxious to find a way whereby the Fijian himself might attain the skill to cultivate sugar-cane. For this reason, so I have been told, an experimental period of two years has been chosen at the end of the lease and before its renewal. But this places the Indian leaseholder in a terrible predicament. What is he to do? Where are his wife and children to go during the two years? How can he himself afford to wait on the off-chance that the Fijian lessor will fail?

What actually happens is a disgraceful system of fleecing the Indian during the interval before the lease is renewed.

(v)

Twenty or thirty years ago, the Indian who had come out of indenture was able, through his close contact with the Fijian, to obtain his lease without serious difficulty. Leases in large numbers were settled and there was very little tribal complication. But money is a "root of all evil," and by this time the Fijian himself has become worldly wise and prudent in money matters. The temptation to blackmail the Indian has become almost overpowering, and the Indian himself increases the evil by his psychological condition of fear bordering on panic. He not only wastes his own savings in bribery, but also places himself in the hands of the money-



lender to obtain extra money, and thus pawns his own future. In this way, demoralization takes place not only on the Fijian side, but on the Indian side also.

(vi)

Everywhere, in all parts of the colony, this whole leasing system was condemned. Not only were Government officials aware of the evil and the C.S.R. Company's managers and overseers, but also men like the Rev. C. O. Lelean and others who had the interests of the Fijians most dearly at heart. Out of such a system, however well-intentioned, two results were bound to occur:

(a) The Fijian would become rapidly degraded. Indeed, already in many instances he is committing slow moral suicide owing to the temptation to laziness which is being thrust upon him.

(b) The Indian finds himself, in middle life, deprived of the fruits of his labour. Bitter discontent ensues. He becomes a broken man.

If it be argued that he obtains compensation, the sad fact is that he has probably spent more than any compensation due to him in his frantic endeavour to get the lease renewed.

But maladjustment of this kind must lead to strife. For if the Indians continue this bribing process and the Fijians become degraded by claiming and accepting bribes, then, in the end, there will be a sense of frustration and injustice.

(vii)

In the light of such facts as these, it is clearly no use to tinker with the situation. The matter must be dealt

with as a whole. To repeat what I have been trying to say in other words, the whole fabric of the sugar industry, as it has expanded outside the C.S.R. Company's land, is in danger of collapsing in the next ten years owing to the falling in of the original leases and the difficulties of renewal.

Unless a wise and sympathetic Administration can stand between the Fijian and the Indian, and arrange an equitable series of new leases, without this endless blackmail and litigation, disaster must ensue. For the Indian farmer's energies, which are needed for the land, are run to waste in endless worry and lavish expenditure of money which he can ill afford. The situation is so grave that nothing but Government action can save it.

I would venture to put forward an outline of what might be done to meet the situation in a manner big enough to effect permanent good :

(a) The Government should in some way release more land that is uncultivated, so that Indians who are ready to buy on a ninety-nine years lease and are known to be good cultivators may become settled at last and not be stranded in a country where large areas of excellent land are unused. While it is true that the Fijians are the original owners of the soil, this cannot possibly mean that virgin soil should lie idle for whole generations when there are those at hand who have the skill and industry to utilize the soil to the lasting benefit of the whole community. Lord Salisbury's pledge that Indians in Fiji should have rights "in no whit inferior to those of any other race" has to be kept as well as the pledge that the ownership of the land should belong to the Fijian race. The harmony of the two pledges surely lies in the Indian settler being able

to buy unused land from the Government when it acts on behalf of the Fijian people. The simple fact that the Government is prepared to take action and offer undeveloped land for sale will make the Fijians themselves more ready to renew their leases to their Indian tenants on moderate terms.

(b) In order to meet the present distress and obtain for the Indians a renewal of leases on reasonable terms a Conciliation Officer in close touch with both parties might be appointed who would take up this special work of lease renewal at once and stop the rot which has now set in. Such an officer might help to tide over the immediate situation while the larger plan was being made.

(c) My substantive suggestion would be that while the Fijian claim, that they are the owners of the land under the British Crown, is fully acknowledged, the leasing system should be taken entirely out of their hands for a certain fixed period and be administered by a Trust Board appointed by the Crown for the benefit of the Fijian race.

(d) In order to make this change without rousing suspicions the step should be undertaken in the King's name. It should be carried out through the King's representative. On no account should it be made a subject of debate in the Fiji Legislative Council, for that would only add to suspicion. The Governor would declare that each tribe will retain its due share in the returns from the land, while at the same time any unearned increment would be put in a reserve fund for the welfare of the Fijian people as a whole. Meanwhile, the Conciliator would make it clear that no further bribery would be allowed; and all those in high position whom the Fijians trusted would explain

as fully as possible that it was for the moral benefit of the Fijian race as a whole that these summary powers were being taken.

(e) When the time is ripe, and not till then, some emissary should come out from the King and enter into the whole question, hearing everything that could be said: and his decision should be final. Every step should be taken in the King's name; for that procedure the Fijians, with their tribal system leading up to the King as their Paramount Chief, understand.

(f) The last act of all would be to form a Trust Board of a very small number of eminently trustworthy persons in whom the Fijians themselves placed every confidence. They should be nominated by the King's representative before he returned to Great Britain.

If the Board worked well and showed by its actions that each tribe had ample lands for its own needs and sufficient funds for its own development, then it would gradually win acceptance on its own merits.

It would be hard to overestimate the value of such a change of procedure at this critical moment when the whole future of Fiji is at stake. The suggestions, made above, are not my own, but the result of a very long enquiry into the whole situation, both from the Fijian and the Indian point of view. I have merely tabulated the best conclusions I could find.

Perhaps the highest duty that the Board might perform would be that of preventing the accumulation of money from rent in a few hands, or in the hands of one or other of the tribes to the exclusion of others. There could be nothing worse than to allow unearned increment from the land to lead to idleness, extravagance, and sloth. For if the Fijian race as a whole becomes relaxed from the strenuous struggle for existence

while the Indian people are always brought hard up against it, then Nature herself teaches us the lesson that indolence pays its own penalty in decay.

(viii)

One further change would come under the competence of the Board. It would be quite possible, while preserving the ownership, to offer leases to good and trustworthy cultivators for a longer period than at present. The ninety-nine years' lease gives a security of tenure that a short lease can never give. No farmer will ever put his whole heart into improving his land, or building his home, if the term of his lease is short and its renewal is doubtful. There must be the sense of secure possession which will bind not only himself but his descendants to the land. Nothing can help Fiji more than a settled population growing up on the land as its own, and not drifting from place to place. "This is the home where I was born. Those trees were planted by my father"—phrases such as these are not empty words. They have a moral and a spiritual value. They are tangible, concrete things which bind the generations together.

Finally, it may be asked whether at the end of a period of years, under the management of the Board, the old tribal leasing system should return. I would leave that question unanswered. If the Board fulfils its purpose, I believe its term of service will be extended. Meanwhile it is also possible that some way may be devised by which the Fijian tribes, or the Fijian people as a whole, may take over these responsibilities with a far better prospect of success than in the old days of bribery and corruption. No race should be kept like a "ward in chancery" too long.

## *Chapter 8*

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S PLEDGE

#### (i)

THE Fijian aspect of the racial problem, within the islands, is clearly the most important of all because with remarkable wisdom and foresight the chiefs, under Cakobau, voluntarily claimed the protection of Queen Victoria at a time when the sudden inrush of Western forces had become too strong for them. An impressive monument of this fact still exists at the centre of the Government Offices, which every official passes daily. Another is to be seen in Levuka on the spot where the treaty was signed.

Of all the pledges which the British Government has given in Fiji this is the first and most sacred. It places, beyond any shadow of doubt, the interests of the Fijian race as the first duty of the Administration. I hope to make this more clear in India itself than it has been in the past.

Whenever I addressed the crowds of Indians in Fiji, who came to hear me, I emphasized the point that the land had been ceded to Queen Victoria and then handed back to the Fijians to be held under her protection. Indians ought therefore to remember that the Fijians, as the original inhabitants of the islands, may demand special consideration at their hands.

This does not, of course, imply that the Indians who had been brought out to improve the land by their hard labour should not receive the fruits of their labours. Just the reverse. They too have land rights,

which Lord Salisbury had promised them: and the land is so abundant and fertile that there is ample room for both to live side by side together.

No doubt whatever is left in my mind that the Fijians look upon the act of Cakabau as binding them in a peculiar sense to the British Throne. If a royal Prince were to come out to Fiji he would be given at once the highest rank of all, since he would be a descendant of Queen Victoria. For these ties are still personal in Fiji, with its closely knit system of tribes, each under a chief, leading up to the King.

Fortunately, as I have explained, the incipient hostilities of the earlier days are now a thing of the past, and a good-humoured friendliness exists between the rank and file of both races, as well as among the leaders. Most of the Indians have learnt a smattering of the Fijian language and some have picked up a remarkable knowledge of Fijian tribal customs.

(ii)

I found nowhere among responsible Indians any slightest wish for Indians to become the dominant people of the colony. Nor was there any idea prevalent among them that the Fijians were a dying race which the Indians would supersede. There was also no wish to interfere with their tribal customs, but rather a patient deference to them. This generous kindness of spirit, on which I have dwelt so often, has carried with it a clean record on either side. Quarrels are so rare as to be practically unknown.

My own deep sympathy with the Fijian people was never resented by the Indians. They fully expected it from me and gave me every occasion possible of meeting

the Fijians whom they know. No trouble was too great in order to bring these interviews about and it was easy for me to see that the pleasure was mutual. In many ways, the Fijians themselves appear to me to have made an advance no less striking than that made by the Indians. There has been, on the whole, much wisdom shown in their education. They have learnt thoroughly to enjoy their own literature which has been printed in the easy Roman script. Above all, the religious basis has remained secure. It is an integral part of the whole system.

(iii)

It would be well for the Methodist Church to consider how far in these countries of the tropics the appeal of bright colour and ceremony and music may be brought into the daily religious life without any loss of that spiritual appeal which is primary and essential.

Since I have been privileged to join in Christian fellowship with the Fijians this question has been insistent with me. The old life was so full of courtly ceremonial and tribal loyalties and festival occasions, that it would seem to involve a very serious break if something far deeper, but at the same time outward in its expression, is not allowed to take its place. To give one instance only of my meaning, would it not be possible to preserve the marvellously beautiful *building* methods of the Fijians themselves for the House of God instead of the very commonplace structures that have been raised in every village?

It is, of course, difficult to make suggestions after such a slight acquaintance with the country, but from my own experience among primitive peoples, certain



things have become clear to me and to neglect them is to face disaster in the same way that we cannot defy the laws of Nature.

The most important of these is that "Nature abhors a vacuum." If the Fijians are taught, even by implication, that what they have taken a pride in, in the past, is foolish and wrong, and that only the white man is wise and clever, the result is bound to be dejection. Race suicide lies perilously near along that road, and it is always a danger in these tropical islands of the Pacific. The inferiority complex is one of the hardest things in the world to get rid of when once it has been formed.

If, however, there are arts and crafts and music and song wherein the Fijian may legitimately take pride and if these are appreciated by the white man in authority whom he respects, and especially the missionary whom he loves, he will take heart again and believe in himself, and not only improve in his own way, but also willingly learn other arts and crafts which the white man may teach him. So fine a delicacy of appreciation is needed here, that only a Christian sympathy of the most intimate character is equal to the test.

(iv)

There is something in the atmosphere of Fiji that seems to produce a tolerance of spirit which rounds off peculiar angles and creates a friendly disposition. Nothing has given me greater pleasure than to feel the genial air of friendliness which has softened down the disharmony of the two races that appeared to be gaining ground in the past. While I have been living

in Fiji, sharing everyone's hospitality and observing not only the marvellous beauty of Nature, but also the parallel beauty in the human spirit, this genial influence of the Fiji climate has been borne in upon me, and I cannot help repeating it.

Now that the indenture system, with its evils, is over, and a healthy home life has taken its place, Fiji has become almost entirely free from crimes of violence as far as the Indian community is concerned. The Fijian record, also, I believe, is remarkably low. The Superintendent of the Central Jail at Suva told me with great satisfaction that he had never known such a crimeless population. Any criminal act between Indian and Fijian is now of the rarest occurrence.

News such as this, which was doubly welcome after my earlier experiences of life under indenture, made me realize, as perhaps nothing else had done, the recovery of these later years and the growing harmony between the races.

Another deeply interesting point was made clear to me in the course of casual conversations. The sight, by Indians, who are deeply religious by nature, of the Fijians worshipping God in their churches and also the sound of their wonderful singing has profoundly touched them. Respect for the Fijian had been strengthened. "If only you heard them singing in their churches," one Indian leader said to me, "you would never forget it. We Indians love music: but we have not got voices like these Kai Viti (Fijians)."

One of the points which always brought loud applause in my addresses came in the course of the parable which I used to tell about the hand. The wrist, I would say, typified love (*prem*) which bound all the fingers together. Then I would point to one of the fingers and

say: "This represents love between the two races." It was always a joy to me to hear the loud cheer that followed this sentence. After much thinking over the subject, I seem to have found a link between the tolerant Hinduism, which most of the Indian community in Fiji profess, and the singularly attractive form of the Christian faith which has made the Fijians what they are. This means that Hinduism carries deep down in it something of the Christian appeal of love. I cannot further define it, but I have no doubt that an inner kinship exists.

(v)

Education has helped to bring the races together in certain ways, but much more might be done if the Fiji Government on its side were prepared to encourage this, instead of keeping the races apart.

In athletic sports, the racial barriers seem to be gradually giving way among the young. The Indian of the rising generation has been greatly attracted by these sports, and remarkable ability has been shown. The Boy Scout movement has also freed itself in a great measure from the racial complex. All kinds of sport that lead to a mingling of the races in a healthy manner ought to be encouraged. Here is a sphere where those Europeans whose respect for the other races is genuine might be able to take a greater part. Anything that can be done to build up self-respect in any field of human endeavour has its own importance.

(vi)

Among the Fijians there are two qualities wherein their pride of race might be more encouraged.

(a) The beauty of their decoration and building, as seen in their chiefs' houses, ought to be preserved and fostered. Whenever I have been taken inside these houses, I have been greatly impressed by the rarity of beautiful forms and intricate patterns which they have worked out in their own peculiar way. There has been something incongruous and ugly in the bare Mission buildings, with corrugated iron roofs, that are to be seen in the centre of each Fijian village. Even if the thatch, such as the Fijians use, brings insect pests with it, some remedy for this could surely be found without changing the whole aspect of the village and making the church unsightly and out of place in it.

(b) Ceremonial evidently holds a high place in the Fijian tribal life and reverence for the chief is traditional. Music has a great attraction, and the beauty of Fijian voices has been noticed by everyone who lives among them. Certainly, qualities like these ought not to be lost sight of within the Christian Church. I could not help wondering whether more ceremonial should not be made a part of every Christian worship. I can understand the danger of too much stress being laid upon the outward form; but it is obviously necessary to employ those aids to worship which touch the ancestral mind of the race.

I have one suggestion to make for what it is worth, and if there is worth in it it should be tried before it becomes too late. It is that each tribe or clan should be encouraged to build, in the style of their own chiefs' houses, the House of God, which should be the noblest and the best. It should also contain, as its adornment, the very best Fijian decoration. No benches of a purely Western character should be introduced and the attitude of prayer, of listening to the Scripture, and

singing, should be adapted to the manner of Fijian life and custom, instead of being modelled on a Western church building with its furniture. In a very short time, if the teacher from the West *insists* on everything Western being introduced, he will find a docile congregation; but very much will be lost that can never be restored. Would it not also be possible to collect records of tunes that are purely indigenous, and to use these in Christian worship, before they die out altogether and are replaced by purely Western music? May there not also be a place for processional singing, especially among the children?

To turn from these thoughts about religion to more secular subjects, the Fijians belong, as I have said, to a proud race with deep loyalties of their own. These can be appealed to by those whom they acknowledge as having authority over themselves. Nothing should be done, if possible, to weaken those loyalties on which so much depends. The instinctive community spirit, which has been encouraged in Christian worship, should be brought into the economic life and made the basis of a universal co-operative movement. Some genius among them has yet to rise who can show us how this is to be done. The way has already been prepared, for there is, I believe, a new energy visible on every side among the Fijians, which has sprung from their deep religious faith based on sacrifice for others. This should not be allowed to die away, in the next generation, owing to lack of use.

(vii)

A story that the Rev. C. O. Lelean told me speaks eloquently of the great qualities that lie behind the

kindliness of heart and good nature which always show themselves upon the surface of the Fijian life. A young student had offered to go out to a distant island in the New Hebrides to minister to the very people who had murdered his own father. He wished to show them the love of Christ. In a book which I have written\* there is another story of the same character where I tell of a communion service at which two more of Lelean's young students dedicated themselves at that "Last Supper" before they went out to take up a similar work in the Solomon Islands.

Who can doubt that a race, so young in Christ and prepared for such heroic deeds, is one that can worthily stand side by side with those from India who have learnt what sacrifice is in their own country? It was not without significance that the Fijian chief whom I have already mentioned said to me, before we parted, "Tell me all you know about Gandhi"; for his wonderful sacrifices on behalf of his own people had evidently impressed this chief beyond measure, and he was eager for his own tribal members to follow Gandhi's example.

(viii)

Everything that can be done ought to be done at this propitious moment to enable these two fine races, with their good qualities, to live together side by side in a generous manner, and also in various ways to learn to help each other. The Fijian race must *not* be allowed to die out as so many races have already done in the Pacific. It should be a matter of careful, continual thought on the part of the Indian leaders

\* *What I owe to Christ* (Hodder & Stoughton).

to discover means to encourage them, so that their children may grow up in wholesome ways, with wholesome food, and not die off so quickly. For it is there, owing to infant mortality, that the leakage lies in the Fijian population; and in an area so limited as Fiji, the words are true :

Where one member of the body suffers, all the members  
suffer with it;  
And where one member rejoices, all the members rejoice  
with it.

In the long run the fate of the Fijian race in the present generation will be decided most of all by the courageous spirit of the parents and their hopeful outlook upon life itself. Indeed, if only the "will to live" can be preserved and the sense of making progress grows stronger, then all the rest will follow from it. But if that goes, all is lost. The Indian community, with its own strong "will to live," living side by side with the Fijians, can greatly help and encourage them by their cordial friendship.

## Chapter 9

### THE INDIAN DILEMMA

(i)

THE problem has now to be faced in all the colonies where Indians have settled down, after indenture has been ended, whether it is best for them to remain bound up politically as well as spiritually with their mother country, India, or whether they should "cut the painter" and start out on their voyage alone. Should they look at all times to India for their support, or should they launch out boldly into the politics of the new country where their children were born, calling *that* their motherland and thinking in those new terms, while remembering India only as a distant dream?

I have been present and watched this great issue being faced by Indians who have been settled abroad, whether in Natal, or Trinidad, or British Guiana, or Fiji, or other countries. Gradually I have learnt my lesson from them. It is this. There is no "cut and dried" formula which may be applied at all times, in every situation. For almost everything depends on the stage that has been reached. Some colonies are backward; some are forward. What may be best at one stage, may be less suitable at another. For the problem is essentially one of adjustment. Whatever knowledge and wisdom I may have gained in these matters has been gained, not from theory, but from practical experience.



## (ii)

In South Africa, for instance, there has grown up the strongest sentiment among the second and third generations of Indians that South Africa—especially Natal—has become now their true home and that therefore they must not appeal continually to India as though they were still foreigners and outlanders. They have taken the name of “colonial born” because they were born, not in India, but in Natal. They insist that they should not rely upon the Agent-General of the Government of India for their support, but upon their own South African birth and parentage. Thus they take their stand with the Nationalists.

There are other Indians, who still have their home ties in India and in many cases were born there, and know by very bitter experience how “coloured” people are treated in South Africa; these are strongly convinced that only by calling into action on their side the full strength of the Government of India are they likely to get their grievances righted and receive fair treatment. These Indians, therefore, regard the Agent-General as a medium whereby they may gain political strength and make use of what power he can give them.

Since the white race in South Africa has a very strong “nationalism” of its own, this insistence by one section of the Indian community on protection from India is regarded as anti-national: at the same time, this “nationalist” element in the white race is most strongly colour prejudiced. The Indians, therefore, who take the help of the Agent-General rightly insist that, as they are denied citizenship and treated as an inferior people, they have every right to seek protection outside South Africa.

## (iii)

I have brought forward this instance of South Africa at some length because the Indian community there has been established for a very long period in that country—especially in Natal where the majority reside—and at the same time has been forced by adverse currents of colour prejudice and legal disabilities to seek protection elsewhere. Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, made his appeal to the whole world when he started his passive resistance movement against General Smuts and General Botha. It was Mahatma Gandhi, also, who made the proposal ten years ago that an Agent should be sent out. He actually proposed the name of the first Agent, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinavasa Sastri. His choice and decision were accepted at the time, with universal rejoicing, and the first Agent accomplished a notable work. Perhaps the greatest monument which he left behind him is Sastri College, at Durban, where the Indians born in Natal from parents who had been under indenture have been educated in large numbers up to a University standard, though the College is not yet a part of any University.

But it is interesting to notice that a section of those who welcomed Mr. Sastri with the utmost cordiality has become more and more dissatisfied since. Their contention is that they are weakened rather than strengthened in the long run by this continued reliance upon India and that they are unable to claim, while they do so, that they are "South Africans" in the fullest sense of the word. It is a question of divided loyalties which is always one of the most difficult to settle, and there is probably no solution satisfactory to all.

## (iv)

The position taken up by the Government of India has always been that wherever the full franchise has been granted to Indian settlers overseas the presence of an Agent is unnecessary; but wherever, as in South Africa, the franchise rights have been withheld, protection as far as possible must be afforded.

As a principle, no doubt, that is sound and logical, but there are intermediate positions which have to be faced and decided on their own merits.

For instance, it would clearly be impossible in Fiji to say that the Indians or Fijians have as yet rights *equal* to those of the Europeans. This political question will be discussed later. Nor can it be said in Fiji that there are no colour distinctions, although the situation there is much better than in South Africa. There would thus be a fair reason for an Agent being appointed on the strength of the Government of India's own definition.

At the same time, from the point of view of remaining ruggedly independent and building up strength from within, there are many considerations that might well give the Indians in Fiji pause before they put in a claim for an Agent. There is a glorious sense of freedom in fighting one's own battle, and this is absent from the process of running to the Agent with every grievance in order to get him to set it right. Also the Agent is bound to deal with every dispute in an official and formal manner. Red tape comes into everything. Certain privileges may be gained: but much at the same time may be lost that is of priceless inner value. It is only with difficulty we realize, especially when we are up against a hard situation, that what touches the

soul is far more important than what touches the body.

Again, so much will depend on the personality of the Agent. The work of an Agent in Ceylon or Malaya is not of the same character as that of an Agent in South Africa or Fiji. In the former case, the main question is that of labour—how to get good labour conditions for Indians who come and go. In the latter case, the question is one of political rights to be obtained for a domiciled Indian population. The relation of the Agent, also, to the Government of India has to be very carefully considered.

(v)

In writing about this important matter, I have tried to be as objective as possible and to avoid merely expressing my own personal views. For I regard it as a vital issue which the Indian community in each colony must clearly decide for itself. It must consider long and carefully the advantages and disadvantages. It must then unanimously, if possible, make up its own mind whether it shall ask the Government of India to send out an Agent, or whether it shall refuse to ask. My only piece of practical advice, which is quite impersonal, would be that, if there were any grave doubts in the matter or divided opinions, then the question should be allowed to lapse for the time being. This is simple common-sense; for divided opinions would be likely to lead to a divided community.

Two points ought to be thought over before any conclusions are formed:

(a) Would it in the long run antagonize other communities in the colony, forcing on their notice the alien character of the Indians?

(b) Would it lead to a party spirit within the Indian community itself—one party siding with the Agent and the other party siding against him?

(vi)

There is another question of equal importance which must be thought out concerning India, the mother country.

The flame of national idealism always burns most bright in those who have left the shores of their motherland. To take an example, the whole national movement in China, which got rid of the effete Manchu Dynasty, had its strength among those Chinese patriots who were living outside China in Malaya and elsewhere. The National Congress will never forget the splendid help that was sent by Indians overseas, more than two years ago, to the Behar Earthquake Fund which it administered on behalf of the people of India. In another hour of emergency, in 1913-1914, when Mahatma Gandhi and thousands of Indians were imprisoned during the passive resistance struggle and thousands more were nearly starving, the national leaders of India, through Mr. G. K. Gokhale, sent most timely and substantial help and thus did their share in bringing that struggle to a successful end.

On another occasion, the National Congress sent out Srimati Sarojini Naidu both to East Africa and South Africa, and through her aid an obnoxious colour bar Bill was held in abeyance and the Indian community saved from irreparable disaster.

Should such mutual help between Indians abroad and the Indian National Congress at home—the question is often asked—be reserved for emergencies

only, or should the National Congress take up the work of helping Indians abroad as a part of its national duty? To put the matter practically in another form—should the work be carried on by the Congress through a Congress office and secretariat, and by means of continuous personal visits to and fro, or should the work of the Congress be of the same character as in the past, namely of an occasional and emergency character, taking advantage of special circumstances on either side, but not regularizing and concentrating effort?

“The one aim of the Congress,” said one member to me, “is to win self-government for India. When that is won, then, automatically, all Indians abroad will be in a better position. When India is free, they will be free also.”

Such an attitude as this has been taken again and again by Congress leaders in India; and in actual practice this is the position that has hitherto been adopted. But this has not been sufficient for Indians overseas and complaints have been continually made that their cause has gone by default. They are not satisfied merely with kindly resolutions passed at the annual Congress meetings. They claim that if their own freedom is taken away by repressive laws and colour bar regulations, Indian freedom suffers a deadly blow in the eyes of the world. On the other hand, a victory for Indian freedom, such as Mahatma Gandhi won in South Africa in 1914, resounds through all the world.

(vii)

It is very difficult to reply to this from a purely logical standpoint. Sentiment will come in from time to time

and upset all logic, as it did in the South African struggle referred to above. The best general answer from certain Congress leaders, who would put the "non-intervention" point of view, would run as follows:

"A dependent India cannot possibly give *effective* help to Indians overseas on every occasion. Only when India is free will her colonials be respected, as they ought to be, in the wider world. Compare the treatment given to Japanese with the treatment meted out to Indians! That will show the difference. If it be argued that the Japanese navy *enforces* respect, it may be answered that India when she is free will have many assets to bargain with, apart from guns and battleships. The trade of India's millions will be no mean bargaining weapon and her intellectual place in the modern world will be far beyond that of Japan. If Congress continues to struggle in India itself against imperialism at its centre, the effort made will be effective. But if it diverts and dissipates that effort in many other directions at the same time, it will be ineffective."

"But this does not imply," the advocate of this policy would continue, "any lack of intelligent interest in Indians abroad, who are fighting the same battle of freedom as ourselves, only in a different way. The battle is going on all along the front. Cheering messages must pass up and down the line. At a certain crisis, the colonial Indians themselves may help largely in the main struggle. For instance, the experience which Mahatma Gandhi gained in South Africa proved to be of immense importance when he became the true national leader of India. Yet this process can hardly be reversed, because our main battlefield is India and we cannot afford to weaken there, even to a small

extent. At some very critical moment there may be one of our number ready to go—just as Sarojini Devi was able to go out for a short time to South Africa in 1924. But to keep a highly staffed office in order to look after the affairs of Indians abroad, and also to keep up continuous secretarial work in India, may be beyond our powers.”

(viii)

Such an attitude, which is not uncommon in India to-day, does not imply a lack of interest in Indians overseas. Its basis is logical and practical. “The freedom of India herself is our main battle,” said one Indian leader to me, “it is there we must win the war. *That* is our ‘Western Front’; the colonies are side issues.”

If this attitude is finally taken—the matter is still under consideration—it will mean a very great responsibility laid on colonial Indians themselves to fight their own battles, receiving their inspiration from the Indian struggle for independence, and refusing to weaken that in the slightest degree for their own purposes. It does also imply a continual and unbroken contact with modern India in all her ideals and aspirations.

(ix)

At times, these aspirations for Indian freedom may seem to conflict with the fullest loyalty to the colony or dominion wherein Indians have become domiciled. But if it be true, as statesmen continually assert, that the one definite goal of the British Commonwealth is to enlarge the bounds of freedom, then there is no ultimate conflict. There is surely a place for all those Indians



within the British colonies who ardently desire that their own motherland, India, may be as free and independent as Great Britain is herself. The position of the Irish Free State would justify their attitude and no one to-day would challenge it. At the same time, it has to be realized, both fully and frankly, that if India herself becomes separated from the British Commonwealth, Indians in the colonies, who are neither colonial-born nor naturalized, become *ipso facto* foreigners. The logic there is inevitable.

The facts in Great Britain are these. There are evidently those who still hold the old imperial idea of subjection of other races under the sovereign rule of Great Britain. This body of die-hard Conservatives has been defeated again and again. It may probably now be said with truth that it no longer represents the great mass of intelligent British opinion. The history of the last hundred years has justified the "Commonwealth" idea more and more; and wherever the Imperialists have resisted that idea they have been defeated. The constitution of South Africa and the Statute of Westminster are the two final victories for the cause of independence. A setback has undoubtedly been made in Kenya, and also in other parts of Africa, but that is all that Imperialists can point to recently as justifying their own position.

In the face of these practical considerations, there is every ground for regarding those in India who are working for a free and independent Constitution as in no sense of the word disloyal to the ultimate British ideal. Even the *right* of separation has been granted by the implications of the Statute of Westminster, though it has never been exercised.

If, at the last, that right of separation *were* exercised

by India and conceded by Great Britain, then and not till then the question of "foreigner" would arise with regard to colonial Indians. They would then be placed in the dilemma, either of resigning their rights as British subjects and taking their stand as foreigners along with an India separated from the British Constitution, or else resigning their rights in a separated India and holding fast to their present position as British subjects. But that way—as South Africa and the Irish Free State seem to show—is not a necessary corollary of complete and final freedom. Everything rather seems to point to a development being brought to its conclusion whereby full nationhood can be attained and held secure without "cutting the painter."

Events are moving so rapidly that in a few years' time any discussion, such as I have outlined above, may be entirely out of date. What I have tried to show is this, that during the present century the trend of the political situation has been all in favour of enlarging the bounds of freedom as far as Great Britain and those countries which have been in the past dependent on her are concerned.

## Chapter 10

### THE EUROPEANS

#### (i)

WE turn now from this long discussion concerning the relations between the Indians and the Fijians, which has led us very far afield, to consider the far more difficult question of the European.

Here we are brought up directly against a strangely modern theory, which still obsesses many Englishmen, that a peculiar superiority attaches to the "white race." The same Englishmen when faced with the Nazi theory of Adolf Hitler—that the German race is superior to any other—bitterly resent it: but they resent equally any questioning of their own "white race" theory, which is just as unscientific as the modern German idea.

To turn from that point back to the main subject—Imperialism, which is gradually giving way in Britain itself to the Commonwealth conception of free and equal nations, finds its last stronghold in the British colonies. There, the essential superiority of the European is often taken as an axiom, a doctrine—almost as a religion. It is assumed, without any scientific proof, that the "white race" not merely in its own domains of the temperate zone, but also in the tropics, must be everywhere and in every way predominant.

There is a delightful book called *We Europeans*, which riddles through and through with scientific facts the Nazi "racial" theory. The time has surely

come when Science should deal in the same manner with this equally absurd conception of "white race" superiority. For though the Nordic race may have exceptional advantages in those parts of the world to which it has been acclimatized for countless generations, it is handicapped by that very white skin and fair complexion (on which it prides itself) the moment it gets to the tropics and has to bear, all day long and all night long, the tropical heat. Both Science and Nature tell the same story. The white man can only be, what he has rightly called himself, a "bird of passage" in the tropics. The searching test is that of the children and the home. Where the home has to be divided and the children have to be separated from their parents, the country is clearly not "a white man's country." Indeed, it remains yet to be seen whether Kenya, with its highlands 6,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea, can rightly claim that title. To use it of a tropical colony such as Fiji is absurd. The climate is telling all the while against the "white man's" children. He may, himself, by taking long furloughs, become used to it: but he will never do there his best work. He is a "so-journer and stranger" as all his fathers were—to quote from the Book of Psalms.

What, then, has been the magnet that has attracted the "white race" to the tropics while vast areas in the temperate zone were still vacant? Why has the "white man" defied all the well-proven lessons of human history in order to come out and live in a climate where he cannot bring up his own children?

There is, of course, only one answer that accounts for the largest proportion of cases. The amazing agricultural wealth of these tropical regions which lie round the globe, in the rain belt on either side of

the Equator, had drawn people from the North. It did so, three centuries ago, when a single island in the tropical West Indies, such as Martinique, was regarded as a greater prize in the struggle between France and Britain than the bitterly cold and ice-bound banks of the St. Lawrence, where Quebec and Montreal stand to-day.

Unless some further disaster happens on a scale even more impoverishing than the World War, the capital needed for the development of these fertile regions will always be forthcoming. Malaya and Java are the best known instances of modern times. The Philippines and Hawaii are hardly less significant from the American side.

(ii)

One factor, however, is always necessary for such tropical development to bring extravagant returns of wealth. There must be an exceedingly cheap and profitable supply of human labour.

This has been provided in Malaya, Ceylon, Fiji, Mauritius, and elsewhere by the Indian agricultural classes. The problem of modern times has always been to safeguard the aboriginal race whenever this new form of labour was introduced. In earlier days this issue was neglected, and the slave labour from West Africa, introduced into the West Indies and South America, gradually weakened the aboriginal races. In Java alone, this problem of protecting the native race has hardly ever existed, because the Javanese themselves were able to stand the strain and do the work. They had all along been a populous and hardy race.

Only where a tropical people, for many centuries

past, has been densely crowded, and where the fittest have survived, does efficiency remain in the blood. In these regions, such as the plains of India and China or the fertile coastlands of West Africa, the weaker children die off according to a well-known biological law. A hardy population remains. Where, however, for some reason or other, as in Fiji or Malaya, the native race has been thinly scattered, the enervating effects of the climate induce leisurely conditions and the struggle for existence becomes, not strenuous, but mild. Yet these races may have admirable qualities, which leisure has allowed to bear fruit, and these ought to be preserved.

(iii)

- . In the overcrowded alluvial lands of India and China, where monsoon rain conditions and tropical heat coincide, the birth rate is excessive and the pressure on the soil extreme. Habits of amazing industry are produced among the survivors, who also get hardened to the tropical heat. They have thus powers of endurance in the tropics which no other races can equal.

When, therefore, the modern exploitation of these tropical regions takes place by means of labour from India and China (instead of the old West African slave labour of a century ago) the main effort of an advanced and humane civilization must be chiefly directed to the prevention of ruthless methods being adopted by those who are eager to make money quickly. Those unscrupulous actions of the past, which have blotted out whole races of mankind, must not be allowed to be repeated.

It is true that the old slave labour has now been abolished and that some of the worst forms of indentured labour have also been stopped by legislation, but the further problem of rescuing from over-pressure the native races in countries where new labour has been introduced, has not yet been solved, and it should be the aim of a humane civilization to explore it and find its solution.

(iv)

To turn back to Fiji—the directing mind in all this material development and extraction of wealth from the soil has been that of the European. But looking far ahead, there is historical evidence which seems to prove that this will not always be the case. Probably the final problem of administration and also of business in Fiji will be to devise ways and means whereby responsibility is handed back to the tropical people themselves as they attain more skill and education and become more used to modern methods.

The reason of this is not far to seek. It rests upon an economic basis, namely, that a European is at least four times as expensive as one who is born in the tropics. He is always an exotic and has to live as an exotic.

The question of efficiency must naturally come in when seeking to strike the economic balance. For it is fatally easy to let things sink back. The European, in the past, has brought with him, in that direction, a valuable asset. But there is no reason why such an expensive person as he is should always be needed in every administrative post. By the method of trial and error, it may be found that there are those born in the tropics, with their energies unimpaired by the

heat, who may be able to do the same work at much less cost, without any loss of efficiency. Little by little, such men are bound to find their way up the scale. They cannot possibly be kept down when efficiency and cheapness are combined. I have worked this point out, in practice, long ago, and have no use left for the theory that the "white man" in the tropics is always more efficient and always more reliable. He is not.

Possibly, in many tropical countries, for a long time to come, the people themselves will desire certain selected officials from Great Britain to remain in office. In other countries, these will not be required in so large a measure. To give examples, Mauritius and the West Indies are somewhat rapidly losing their white population. Compared with a century ago, the tropics have won the race. The opposite has happened in Portugal (to quote one instance only) where a century ago there was undoubtedly far more negro blood than there is to-day. To put it in the language of Eugenics, in the West Indies the dark race is dominant: the white race is recessive. In Portugal or the Cape Verde Islands, the white race is dominant: the dark race is recessive.

While, therefore, at the present moment in the Pacific, the guiding hand of the European still appears to be necessary owing to the immaturity of the Fijian and the recent arrival of the Indian, nevertheless the moving Finger of Destiny is writing all the while its own final verdict, and no human wit can erase the words that are being written. The race is not to the swift, but to the enduring.

It is true that, at the present juncture, there are not a sufficient number of capable persons of other races



to keep the whole machine of the administration and of business and commerce going at full speed. But already there are many in the lower positions, drawing a much lower salary, who could easily take higher posts. These palpable inequalities cannot go on for ever. The Indian or Fijian who is born and bred and educated in Fiji will have every right to claim a post for which he is well qualified, in preference to one who comes from another country. It will be impossible in one and the same breath to uphold the White Australia policy for Australia, and to claim that the same principle should not be applied in tropical Fiji.

Exceptions, of course, may be found of those belonging to the white race who have been marvellously able to thrive in Fiji without any loss of vigour, and also to bring up children: but these exceptions only prove the rule. It may be, that in Fiji they will be more numerous than in other colonies; but they will be exceptions all the same.

(v)

The Science of human habitat is a young Science: but there are certain facts already established. One of these is the enervation of the North European in a climate which is both hot and moist at the same time. He may be able to live in it: but he cannot do his best work. It is true that the same European may gradually acclimatize himself in a dry heat such as that in certain regions of Australia. It is also true that experiments are being made in North Queensland where there is a fortunate and singular absence of tropical diseases. But even if it can be proved that with extreme difficulty he is able to bring up a family under these severe conditions, he does not *thrive*

under them. His best faculties become enervated. For while a "cold weather" climate, such as Melbourne, tells all in favour of bringing out what is best in the Australian who is British by ancestry, the hot damp climate of Port Darwin tells in the opposite direction. For that is the real tropics.

No temporary alleviation caused by modern scientific contrivances such as electric fans, iced water, and cooled chambers, can overcome the pressure of the climate which goes on all the while. Nor will the new art of aviation do much in the long run to alter the relative position of the races. For in these tropical countries, within the equatorial rain belt, it is ultimately the dwellers on the soil that count. They are the true makers of wealth. The final test of all is whether the daily labour on the soil can be performed by the white race, or whether other people have to be called in to undertake it. In the long run, these islands of the Pacific, bordering on the Equator, belong by birth-right to the tropical races and they will come back to them at last, just as Jamaica and Mauritius have already done. The European, from the cold North of Europe, with his pale skin which cannot face the burning heat without wilting, is already in many notable respects fighting a "rearguard action." Jealously to seek to retain everything in his own hands is folly. He cannot fight against Nature. Rather than this, he ought to be preparing others to take his place: for that alone can save from ultimate disaster.

(vi)

This insistent fact, of deep physical origin, has become far more evident to me during this, my third visit, to

Fiji. It should not in the least disconcert the European or make him think that his days are already numbered, though it should open his eyes concerning the distant future.

For there will always be a place for those Europeans who have devoted their lives to Fiji and have old family connexions with it, that will still be theirs. In the end, though fewer in number, the British permanent resident may exercise a moral and intellectual influence of far greater actual importance than his present precarious political power. This has been proved in the West Indies and other parts of the world.

The British resident's wealth and comfort may still be considerable, if he is willing to settle down permanently under changed conditions. But he must realize that within the British Constitution political power cannot always remain his monopoly. If he attempts to retain a virtual oligarchy, or dictatorship, he may incur in the end the united opposition of the other races and be excluded from that larger moral sphere where his influence might still prevail.

His influence in Fiji has already been remarkable and I have been impressed by its results in the prosperity which is so noticeable at the present time. In spite of much that has been deplorable in the past with regard to the introduction and regulation of the indenture system, Nature herself has been at work to correct some of his major mistakes. Perhaps no other race, except the European, could have brought about the *material* prosperity which now exists in Fiji in spite of the world depression.

Moral victories, of far greater moment, have also been gained by Europeans such as Hunt, Cargill, and Cross, who brought to Fiji the Christian religion

a century ago. When we compare their lives of incredible hardship with our own, we stand amazed at what they were able to suffer patiently for Christ's sake. Men and women from Australia and New Zealand have followed in their train, and their sacrifices on behalf of the Fijian race have not been less remarkable.

In the Indian sphere the name of Miss Dudley stands out for her devoted love and zeal for Indian education, and those of Burton and Piper for their fearless moral courage in exposing the evils of indenture. In the Fijian sphere, the greatest name to-day is that of the saintly veteran, C. O. Lelean.

The Marist Brothers and Sisters have also rendered a service of humanity, which the Indian community in Fiji can never forget. Their Christ-like character has left its mark on many Indian leaders who were educated by them in their youth.

Much still remains to be done which can only be undertaken with fullest efficiency by Europeans. For they possess the technical training and ability. But they will be very wise, as I hinted before, if they decide to train in time their successors and make constant choice of their assistants from the other races. For the days of "white race" expansion are really over as far as the British are concerned. Already warnings are being given us (not in Britain alone) of a rapidly falling birth rate, which will mean in many directions a "drawing in" instead of a "sending out." It is impossible to hold one quarter of the world's surface and people it anew with a diminishing race. Furthermore, if some great disaster were to happen in Europe, in these highly critical days, which would call for a still further sacrifice of our noblest and our best,

this would immediately deplete the stock of those whose traditions have urged them in the past to go abroad as Colonial officials, or from Australia as managers, engineers, and overseers of the C.S.R. Company and the large commercial firms; and it is becoming generally agreed that for the higher posts none but the very best are required.

Unless, therefore, the training of Indians and Fijians up to the highest degrees of technical and administrative skill is rapidly taken in hand, a shortage may come at any time and the whole imposing structure which has been built up with such care and foresight may fall to the ground.

(vii)

The character and texture of the European population in Fiji differs largely from that which is met with in other tropical colonies. The reason for this is its nearness to Australia and New Zealand, from whence most of the Europeans come who are engaged in trade and manual work.

In the big shops, employees of different races often work side by side. There are also European mechanics working with Indian assistants. Since Australians predominate here, this type is democratic. Everybody, in theory at least, is as good as his neighbour. "A man's a man"—to use a common phrase, which cuts across racial prejudices. For many of this class, Fiji has become their real home, and the mixed population marries into this group and is increasing more rapidly than any other portion of the population.

The children of these marriages enter the grammar school and look forward afterwards to find a means of

livelihood in the colony. The fallacy of separating off, at this higher stage, the children of other races from the children of these European parents has already been exposed. It is ruinously extravagant and seriously harmful in creating race prejudices where none need exist. Just at a sensitive age, when everything should be done to avoid such prejudices, they are thus artificially manufactured.

So far, in spite of these blunders in the administration, the racial factor has not become so acute as in Kenya or South Africa. Fiji itself seems to have a happy faculty of smoothing out intolerances. Yet the most severe test is still to come, when the number of educated Indians and Fijians rapidly increases and there are not enough posts to go round. Then will be the time when every effort will be needed to adjust the whole community, so that there may be no heart-burning.\*

\* A further discussion of the influence of the tropics upon the "white race" will be found in chapter 17.

## *Chapter II*

### THE RACIAL PROBLEM

#### (i)

AGAIN and again I have been asked by the highest Government authorities in Fiji and also by leading Europeans concerning the racial problem and the very rapidly increasing population of mixed Fijian and European descent. The origin of this population goes back a very long way in the history of the islands, before ever Indian indentured labour came. Very many, who are to-day bringing up their own children with great care, are the third or fourth generation from those who were born of mixed parentage in the earliest days. They form a section of the population of Fiji that intermarry among themselves and have also *their own way of living*. They reside chiefly in Suva and its suburbs and among them are families that are extremely poor. Others have reached a high standard of education and are comparatively prosperous.

"Can you help us," many have asked me, "from your own wide experience of India? For in India, we are told, the same problem exists on a very much larger scale than in Fiji. Is there any general principle which may be applied towards the solution of the whole problem?"

#### (ii)

My answer has always been that the one sovereign principle lies in the care of the children, especially

when they are very young. Above all it is necessary to give them that strength and support, from an early age, which comes from a living religious faith. For this can mould their lives and give them hope.

It is also necessary to avoid, in their education, anything that makes for a self-conscious and morbid class or race attitude towards society, so that they may grow up as healthy, happy children not brooding continually on their difference from other children, but mixing freely with them. This can be done, because little children have singularly little race-consciousness by nature: it is an artificial thing for the most part. To emphasize such distinctions is to do such children a cruel wrong: for all that is psychologically morbid lies in that direction.

Money wisely spent by the State on their home-training and kindergarten education repays itself a hundredfold, because their characters are being formed at the tenderest age of all, when they are quite young. If they are "nobody's children," badly looked after and treated with contempt, they are bound to retain that fatal inferiority complex which above all things must be avoided. For it will ruin all healthy development.

But if, on the contrary, they are carefully trained at the earliest stage, when they are very little children, and treated with every motherly care and kindness, then they may become so strengthened as to form their characters in a sturdy mould and get rid of any weakness which they may have inherited. In this case, they are much less likely to relapse in later years.

It will be clear from what I have written that the kindergarten stage is the most critical of all. Once that stage is past, without any true education of a generous



type, then afterwards the battle is far harder to fight on their behalf. The morbid aspect of things is likely to creep in and spread disease of a mental type.

For such an education as I have described there is one thing that is needed, and it cannot be passed over at this point. If the "white race" prejudice is artificially developed in their education itself and there are racial barriers all up the scale then a fatal class-consciousness in the child of mixed parentage is likely to be developed. A repulsion from other children will be created and an attraction to everything European. This will produce hatred, not love: and no true education can be built up on a foundation of hate.

(iii)

The greatest debt of all, in these matters, is owed to the Roman Catholic Church, which has been their true Mother not only in Fiji, but in India and other countries besides. She has nursed them as her own children, when they were often despised and forsaken. Though I am not a Roman Catholic, I am thankful for the noble work that has been done. For these children, to whom my heart has gone out in sympathy and love, have often found in the bosom of that Church a largeness of Christian charity that is precious. They have also seen in action how all these cruelties and inequalities of man's making have been done away in Christ.

As some slight return for the wonderful devotion and sacrifice of the Sisters of the Poor and the Marist Brothers in Suva, while they carry on this great work, the funds provided by Government for educational purposes ought to be generously adequate. They should

always be ample for the equipment and staff necessary to undertake this task, which is of the highest civic importance. The grants in aid, should err, if anything, on the side of generosity: for nothing can be too good for furnishing an education where so much is at stake.

There should also be provision made, wherever necessary, for food of good nutritive value, since not a few of these children come to school in a condition of physical unfitness which makes hard mental work difficult.

It may be well to repeat with emphasis that the essential thing is that the children's training should begin at the earliest stage possible. It is the youngest children in this respect who matter most. What has to be aimed at from the very first is to develop a single and not a divided personality; to make the children entirely oblivious, if that is possible, of the question of race and colour. This can best be accomplished by well-trained, motherly teachers, who know how to develop in little children a will power of their own, instead of continually repressing them and making them old before their time.

It is a strikingly true statement, which I have often proved by a wide experience, that children of a mixed parentage of this kind have a natural bent towards religion, which can be cultivated in them while they are young.

There is no need, in these notes, to argue or explain this fact. I believe that all those who have had to deal with such children would agree with me on this point. It is for this reason, among others, that I am happy to think of them being under the gentle care of those whose religious devotion is the one thing that makes life worth living. Daily intercourse with such devoted

brothers and sisters of the poor in Fiji whose loving-kindness goes out to all without any distinction of colour or class or creed gives a hope for them that could be given very often in no other way.

(iv)

It is a joy to repeat that the colour prejudice which I found prevailing everywhere in the old indenture days has decreased. One reason for this is the remarkable advance made by the Indian community itself. The "ragged" condition of those indenture years is gone, never to return. Travellers and visitors constantly notice the spotlessly clean dress of the Indian children and the beautiful *saris* of their mothers. Recently, I read an article in a New Zealand paper commenting on this in a very kindly manner. Such an article would never have been written twenty or thirty years ago. After this last visit to the colony, my one wish is that healthy pride like this among the children and their parents should be encouraged. The Education Department should be urged to do everything in its power to increase the school accommodation so that every child should receive education. If free compulsory education were introduced there would not be a parent who would object, and to aim at universal compulsory education for all races is not an unpractical ideal. It has been aimed at in the Philippines and Hawaii and should be striven for in Fiji.

(v)

I have already commented severely on the colour line which appears still to be drawn at the Company's

mills as a relic of the old indenture days. The information has been given me that a similar error might be made with regard to the new township at Tavua on the way to the gold-fields. In a comparatively small area, such as Fiji, any segregation on racial lines would be fatal and I hope it will never be attempted. For the infection of race prejudice would once more begin to run through the colony like an epidemic. This would disturb those happier racial relations that are now being formed and are bearing fruit.

From a medical point of view it would be equally disastrous. For any attempt to isolate the Europeans in this manner simply cannot be done. It brings its own nemesis with it. Such segregation is always at the expense of the other races, and as a consequence "slums" are created. Disease, started in the slum area, spreads into the segregated quarter. I have seen this in every part of the world and it has invariably led to disaster.

In all the new townships that are now being constructed, the first of all considerations should be to take the sanitary system *as a unit*. But where the European, in the colonies, seeks to segregate himself, in order to give himself special protection, there sooner or later his selfishness finds him out. For disease, in an epidemic form, knows no boundaries, and a focus of disease generated in a slum attacks the rich as well as the poor.

Unlike South Africa, there has never grown up either in Australia or in New Zealand a racial or colour prejudice so deep as to become almost a religion. I used to imagine the "White Australia" policy to be such a creed, but I have learnt better. I know now from long experience that it is economic, not racial. I have also witnessed with pleasure the good treatment

of the Maoris in New Zealand. There is no race feeling there. It would be a thousand pities if Fiji, which comes within this belt, were to relapse again and to create a new colour prejudice of its own.

On my former visit, I well remember how the matron of the central hospital at Suva, one of the noblest of women, told me when I was a patient that one of the nurses who had newly joined the staff had complained to her that she would only nurse European patients. Without a moment's hesitation, the matron gave her the alternative either to withdraw that statement or to take notice and leave the service. The human body was sacred, the matron told her, and referred her to the words of Christ, "I was sick and ye visited Me." These words, she added, were not said concerning any particular race, but about all mankind. The story ended happily, for the nurse was ashamed of what she had said and withdrew it.

The world of the future has no use for the palpable absurdity of judging a man's moral qualities by the colour of his skin!

(vi)

On one Sunday, when I was preaching in the Fijian church at Suva to a crowded congregation, a troop of New Zealand boy scouts were seated in the midst of the congregation side by side with the Fijian boy scouts, who paid them every attention. The pleasure of the whole Fijian congregation was very noticeable. As an example of practical Christianity this simple action was remarkably effective. The most interesting part of the service came when the Fijian scout leader welcomed in simple English the British troop from

New Zealand and the scout leader from New Zealand returned thanks.

The Indian boy in Fiji has altogether healthy instincts concerning athletic games, and his physical development in the Fiji climate has been remarkable. Some of the best things that I have seen on this last visit have been connected with the spread of athletic games among the young people. These have produced in them a love of hard manual work. At a school, at Nadi, called after my name, the boys are determined to make their own cricket field by levelling the soil themselves. In other parts of the islands I saw the same good practical results. At Nausori, the old school building had to be removed. The boys helped in the work and did all the painting and cleaning with their own hands. When the boys of different races meet together in play and work of this kind they are much too healthily employed to worry much about "colour" or "race." As the Australians say, "A man's a man."

(vii)

If the objection is raised that such a mingling together, even in healthy sports and occasional church services, is bound to lead on to further intermingling of races, with its concomitant of children of mixed parentage, there is the strongest evidence to show that facts tell the other way.

Wherever healthy and natural relations between the races are observed, there appears immediately to be a diminution of those illicit unions which do all the mischief. On either side there develops a healthy instinct *against* inter-marriage. It is not even thought of.

Indeed, in my own experience of human life, espe-

cially among the young, I find it is the very prohibition of inter-marriage that sets up a violent reaction. Where everything is healthy and natural, these things rarely occur. Where the atmosphere is unnatural and morbid, they are all the more likely to happen.

An illustration is ready to hand in Fiji itself. For Indians and Fijians live close together with healthy, friendly relations; yet there is not the least thought of inter-marriage. In India, again, we have a very wide experience of people living side by side without any thoughts of inter-marriage entering their heads.

As the world of humanity draws closer together, the only natural moral sanction against inter-marriage, where eugenically it would be a blunder, lies in these natural disinclinations reinforced by public opinion.

Such an enlightened moral sanction is altogether different from an inhuman and unnatural colour bar, which prohibits other forms of human intercourse and not the sex relation only. Certain people in the world have already built up healthy moral sanctions. As history goes forward, more and more of these sanctions will be made, but not by force.

(viii)

Far greater strictness ought to be observed, in a small group of islands like Fiji, when choosing the Europeans who are invited to come out and take up appointments. The harm that one European, filled with race prejudice, can do is out of all proportion to the injury caused by an undesirable member of one of the other races. Not only is stricter restriction of immigration needed—and a special need arises now that gold-fields have been discovered—but much remains to be done

in selection of candidates for the Civil Service and also for subordinate posts in large business concerns such as the C.S.R. Company.

The clearest warning ought to be given beforehand that racialism will on no account be tolerated either on the part of the Government or by the C.S.R. Company. If every European who enters Fiji knows for certain that his appointment will largely depend on his conduct in this respect and that bad racial manners, as John Morley said concerning India, are a crime, we should have much less rankling bitterness in the hearts of those races who have not the privileges which Europeans enjoy.

Nothing, perhaps, is of greater importance in these matters than the example set by the highest officials, starting from the Governor and his entourage, and also by the heads of business firms and managers of mills.

Since the European is Christian, by religion, a very grave responsibility rests with the ministers of the Church. It is, of course, action that counts, and the minister of Christ in Fiji has to show first of all that "in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but all are one Man in Christ Jesus." Any minister of religion who is not setting that forth in his daily life is untrue to his Master.

It is unfortunate that on account of language difficulties Christian congregations are divided according to the language spoken. Therefore it is all the more necessary to meet from time to time in common worship where language is not a barrier in order to express "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The Church has acquiesced in a practical racialism far too much, and it was a miserable thing to see in Fiji, even



at Suva the centre, hardly any effort made at common worship where all are one in Christ.

Among the Roman Catholics there seems to me here in Fiji a nearer approach to the Christian ideal of racial unity in the great act of Christian worship each Sunday morning than among other Christian communities. Is there still no way among those who are not Roman Catholics of reaching that corporate sense, where race and language are transcended in one supreme act of adoration?

On certain festival occasions, at least, some such effort might be made. Above all, among the children, these racial barriers should be broken down. What happened in the first glorious age of martyrdom, when the Church was really one, ought to be realized over again in this first Christian age in the Pacific. There is no greater task in this part of the world, which the Church of Christ is called upon to take up to-day, than the removal of these hateful barriers of race and colour. Such a witness would be worth all the present missionary effort put together.

## *Chapter 12*

### THE FRANCHISE ISSUE

(i)

SIR MURCHISON FLETCHER, himself, when Governor of Fiji, raised both the political and the racial issue at the same time by proposing that in future all elections should be cancelled and the Governor should place his own nominees not only in the Executive, but also in the Legislative Council.

It was this action on the part of the Governor, backed up by some and opposed by other Europeans, which brought me out a third time to Fiji. For the acute crisis which this action provoked seemed to me to be a strong enough reason to accept the invitation of the Indian community and help to rescue the franchise which was so powerfully threatened with extinction. I found that this strangely retrograde action was due to a fear that in the future Indian votes might become the predominant factor, because while the European community, which had held the power hitherto, was diminishing numerically, the Indian educated community was increasing. A further factor seemed to be that the population of mixed parentage, which was counted as European, was increasing far faster than the purely European element. Therefore, for election purposes, those who were only partly European by descent would sway the elections. There was also an apprehension that the Indian demand for an electoral common roll would be renewed and it was regarded as almost certain that this, if introduced, would mean

in time Indian predominance. In these diverse circumstances, it was felt by some Europeans that what would virtually be the personal rule of the Governor, with an advisory Council of his own choosing, would enable him to hold the balance more even than any appeal of a democratic kind to an electorate racially divided.

(ii)

I trust that in what I have written the attitude of those Europeans who sided with the Governor has been fairly stated. If the franchise had never been given to the colony the proposal of the Governor would not have seemed so reactionary. But when the constitution had already been given, on very moderately democratic lines, then to withdraw it and revert to personal rule seemed both to the Government of India and also to the people of India to be a policy based on fear which could be shown in a great measure to be groundless. The effect would be to put Fiji back as a Crown colony instead of bringing it forward. Just when the other races were seeking to develop further politically and share the responsibility of government, Fijians and Indians would be placed under the arbitrary rule of a Governor who might be altogether new to the country, and dependent on his own officials and a small group of Europeans for his views about races other than his own. His nominees would probably be those whom this very small group of Europeans regarded as safe and trustworthy. They were unlikely to be those whom the Indians themselves trusted for their independence of judgment and fearlessness of character. Thus the reversion to personal rule would mean political stagnation and a gradual drifting apart

of the races owing to the overpowering European ascendancy with nothing whatever to check it.

(iii)

When I came to Fiji and examined the situation once more in the light of what I had seen in other colonies, I was struck with the backwardness of political development as compared with other colonies.

In British Guiana, Mauritius, and Kenya, for instance—to mention three colonies only—there were already others besides Europeans admitted to the Executive, where the real power of government lay. Such a thing had never even been heard of in Fiji. There seemed to me, therefore, a reactionary spirit already at work in Fiji, out of keeping with the whole ideal of the British Constitution.

To give a few instances, in British Guiana, the Attorney-General was an American Negro and an Indian was appointed to the Executive. An Indian was also holding the post of Magistrate in the Civil Service. On the Gold Coast an African was the Solicitor-General. There are Indian and African members of the Executive elsewhere in British colonies. If the Royal Proclamation is to be observed, declaring racial and religious equality, then it is quite obvious that Fiji is already far behind the other colonies.

Then, further, another point struck me when I compared Fiji with other places that I had visited. In the West Indies the Civil Service is open to the indigenous races. In some islands, such as Jamaica, a fairly large number of posts are held by non-Europeans. Only at the very top are Europeans in the majority. But in Fiji it is difficult, if not impossible,

for an Indian to get beyond a second grade clerkship. It is true that Ratu Sukuna, a Fijian, has been raised to the rank of District Commissioner. But he is in a minority of one, and no Indian has reached anywhere near that position. Here, again, Fiji is retrograde in its constitutional development.

If, then, the franchise itself was taken away, which all Crown colonies of any standing possess, it would mean a still further setback and what in the end would amount to the personal rule of a Dictator, with no education in self-government whatever.

On all these grounds, when I came to examine the whole problem, it seemed clear to me that Fiji was already among the retrograde colonies in the British dominions, failing lamentably to carry out the principles underlying the British Constitution; therefore, to plunge still further into reaction of a racial character would be disastrous.

(iv)

If the reply to all this be made that the Fijian chiefs under Cakobau handed over their power to Queen Victoria in 1874, and therefore put themselves under European and not Indian protection, I would point out that in 1875, Lord Salisbury, the Minister of Queen Victoria, when approaching the Indian Government to obtain indentured Indian labour, made the solemn promise that Indians who emigrated to Fiji, as soon as they were free from indenture, should have rights and privileges there "in no whit inferior to those of Her Majesty's other subjects resident in the colony." It was only on this pledge that Indian recruited labour was allowed to come to the assistance of Fiji at a time

when all other methods of obtaining labour had been tried in vain.

Thus it was made clear from the very first that the pledge made by Queen Victoria to King Cakobau did not in any way involve the stoppage of constitutional development. In other words Queen Victoria's pledge was made as Head of the British Constitution. The Fijian chiefs, who had had some experience of other forms of Western government, preferred the British. The deed of Cession carries us up to this point about which there is no dispute.

But if the argument implies that Indians are to be deprived of their own constitutional rights, solemnly promised them, because some Europeans in the colony interpret the Queen's promise differently from that pledge of Lord Salisbury made at the same time, it is palpably absurd. The two promises may be harmonized if the name of Queen Victoria stands for the Head of the British Constitution. In law and practice, no other meaning could be attached to it in this connexion.

The promise of Queen Victoria surely implies that the political development of the Fijian people shall go forward as speedily as possible under her rule. The pledge given by Lord Salisbury implies that the political development of the Indian people shall also go on as speedily as possible. The European is not the only one to hold the reins of office or to sit on the Executive Council.

If, therefore, in accordance with the principle of racial equality, a Fijian chief, as I hope, is appointed on the Executive Council, there seems to be no reason why an Indian, with the necessary qualifications, should not be appointed also. If again Ratu Sukuna

can get so high by his ability in the Civil Service as a District Commissioner, there seems to be no reason why Indians should be kept back to the lower grades of clerkship.

(v)

With regard to the Legislative Council in Fiji it is necessary to bear in mind that its non-official members have very little real power. The official majority can outvote them on every occasion even when the non-officials are united. This makes the true position of the Legislature rather a means of obtaining the views of the general mass of the people and taking them into consideration than one of actually carrying them into effect. The members elected are able to watch the interests of their constituencies, to protest against reckless or unsound financial expenditure and to keep the Governor well informed about the feelings of the country. In all these ways they serve a valuable purpose. They are friendly critics of Government rather than ministers in authority.

But just because this is their main function, they would lose their value to the Government if they were its own nominees. For they would forfeit that independence which is their greatest present asset. It would be impossible for them to keep the confidence of the ordinary citizen if they are the nominees of the Government at the same time. With regard to the Indian community, I could say with certainty that confidence would be lost. Therefore, however much the fact may be disguised, to change "election" into "nomination" would be a backward step in British constitutional procedure. It would throw Fiji still further behind the other colonies in its progress towards self-government.

The Indians would feel that they had been deprived of a statutory right in order to satisfy a small group of dissatisfied Europeans.

(vi)

I have heard it said that the Fijians are in favour of all-round nomination. I doubt this. The chiefs may be induced, when they know the Governor's opinion, to pay deference to it. That is the way with chiefs, who depend on the paramount power, all the world over. Certainly, I found no desire on the part of the chiefs with whom I talked to interfere with the elective system for Indians and Europeans. In this respect I have evidence that might possibly not be given to Government officials: for the chiefs are obviously reticent about uttering their private opinions to those who are in power. This happens in every country and is not at all confined to Fiji. Meanwhile, there are signs everywhere of progressive thought among the younger generation, and as this develops the young Fijian is not likely to be satisfied with Government nomination, merely from a panel of chiefs, of those who represent his own race. With education now almost universal and young Fijian minds grasping the principles of freedom which they learn from the history of England, they are not likely always to be satisfied with paternal rule either from their own chiefs or from the British Government. Even if the leaven of freedom of thought is small in quantity to-day and the hold of tribal custom is strong, yet this will not always remain the case. To keep up this purely paternal form of government too long would evidently be a mistake just as it would also be a mistake to sweep it away



too quickly. The art of true government lies in adjustment.

(vii)

I would state emphatically, therefore, that any system of nomination, instead of election, for Indians and Europeans would be retrograde. From the constitutional point of view it would be harmful. It would also hurt the Government. It would in no sense satisfy the demand either of the Indian community or of a considerable proportion of the Europeans. It would accentuate the dictatorial powers of the Governor and encourage favouritism and flattery.

(viii)

With regard to the actual process of election my own personal opinion has always been that a common roll is best: but I have put it forward, in certain very difficult cases, *along with a fixed number of seats*, so that there could be no question of "domination" by any separate race or religion. I advocated this in the Kenya Conversations in 1923, and have also advocated it for the Hindu-Muslim elections in India.

In both these instances, the arguments which carried weight with me have not been accepted, and yet they seem to me to be of such value that I venture to put them down again here.

The main argument is very simple. Where there are joint electorates, the only candidate who will succeed will be the one acceptable to both races or both religions. The fanatical racialist, or bigoted religionist, stands little chance of election; for he will offend one side or the other. Wherever this system is practised

(as in the West Indies) it has proved its merits; for it is found that mere racialism soon falls into the background and economic interests which are common to both races come to the front. Men settle down to work for the good of the whole country rather than for one section.

To take an illustration, if the Roman Catholics in England had been given a separate electoral roll in the Reform Councils of 1833, there would have been increasing division and separation. As things stand to-day, with one common electoral roll, every one is satisfied.

(ix)

An argument has been brought forward which seeks to counter this logical view of the situation. It is said that the European voters, even when the number of seats is fixed, would become swamped by the increasing number of Indian voters. Then, the European whom the Indians liked best would always be elected, instead of the one whom the European voters preferred. The reply might be made that the process is reciprocal. The European vote would tell heavily in favour of the Indian whom the Europeans preferred.

But to me the most convincing argument is this, that only by the common roll can racialism be steadily kept in abeyance and racial comity be encouraged. The common roll is an educative instrument, taking the mind of the whole community away from the purely racial factor.

Frankly, I am afraid that the European in Fiji does not believe in racial equality at all but in racial supremacy. He wishes this supremacy to go on for all time to come, however much the other races grow up

and come to maturity. He feels that even though he may be only a fractional minority he must always be supreme. Herein he is clearly acting against the spirit of the British Constitution as it has been interpreted for over a hundred years.

The only precedent that can be brought forward is the recent example of Kenya. To-day, as Sir A. Berriedale Keith has pointed out, Kenya and Fiji stand together as anomalies in the British Constitution and India has every right to protest against them.

(x)

While I have felt it necessary to state in some detail this aspect of the common roll, there are two things which would prevent me from pressing it any further.

(a) In order to be effective the Fijians ought to take part in it. They are not ready to do so because of their tribal system. From what I have seen of their progress in education and also their grasp of the liberalizing Christian religion, they are not likely to remain in their present feudal state for a long time to come. But I should be the last to wish to break it down prematurely.

(b) While, as I have stated, the racial prejudice among the Europeans is much less than it was before, it needs time to heal. The question of the "common roll" revived it in an unfortunate way. This, therefore, is not the time to press it now.

Since therefore racial goodwill is the end in view, it would be short-sighted to force the issue. But it would be equally short-sighted for the Europeans to entrench themselves behind a system of nomination which is entirely contrary to all British precedent. Certainly,

this retrograde step of falling back on "nomination" should never for a moment be contemplated.

(xi)

Since writing these notes on the franchise a final pronouncement has been made in the form of a compromise. Three seats are to be elected and two nominated.

The old Legislative Council contained:

- 6 European elected members.
- 3 Indian elected members.
- 3 Fijian chiefs (chosen from a panel).
- 13 Officials.

The officials thus always carried a majority. This is to remain. But the new Council is to contain:

- 5 Europeans (3 elected, 2 nominated).
- 5 Indians (3 elected, 2 nominated).
- 5 Fijian chiefs (chosen from a panel).
- 16 Officials.

As far as numbers are concerned the new Council is a slight improvement on the old. For the heavy preponderance of Europeans is lightened. But when we come to the compromise made with regard to "nomination" there is ground for dissatisfaction. For the Governor's nominees are likely to represent Government policy and thus merely add to the official majority. We note also that the nominated seats will be in as high a proportion as two to three, in comparison with those elected. This applies to European and Indian seats alike. Again, as far as the Indian community is concerned, those who are nominated by

the Governor cannot at the same time be truly representative: they have never gone through the hard test of election.

Instead, therefore, of helping the Indian vote they are likely to split it. Thus, they may divide the Indian people just at a time when unity is essential. I studied very carefully indeed the question of the Muslim minority in Fiji and tried to find out if they felt the need of a nominated seat, but they were not in favour of it. They wished instead for a separate elected Muslim seat. This would have made matters still worse and I dropped the subject. The fact is that in Fiji there is no ground for an acute Hindu-Muslim problem. If a Muslim candidate were put forward for election, or a Christian candidate, who was known to be self-sacrificing and patriotic, he would stand a good chance of election. It is not possible to speak with certainty about such things, but in the atmosphere which I found in Fiji during this last visit it was easy to see that the main Indian interests were economic and educational, and that these did not touch the basis of religious difference. They were common to all Indians alike.

I have already pressed for an Indian member on the Executive; but I can now see, with some apprehension, that such a member may be chosen from the Governor's nominees rather than from the elected members. I can foresee the Governor claiming that his hands should not be tied, and that the choice of his Executive must be left entirely in his own hands. There is much to be said for that discretion. But if it works out, in practice, that one of the Governor's nominees leaps from the Legislative to the Executive Council, without ever having faced an Indian elec-

torate, it will bring to an end the democratic principle which the British Constitution stands for. The Governor may then virtually become a dictator. Thus the thin end of the wedge of nomination is not so harmless as at first sight it appears: it is a step leading directly away from representative government.

(xii)

Just as, in the Executive Council, no step has been taken to afford the Indians a fair racial proportion, so also there has been very little attempt as yet to show fairness in the Colonial Civil Service. Indeed, the state of things that exists to-day in Fiji is little less than a betrayal of the principle of racial equity.

In all the colonies the Civil Service has a unique power in the administration. It furnishes the heads of all departments, and these heads in their turn become official members either of the Executive or else of the Legislative Council. Thus the Civil Service is the virtual ruler of Fiji with the Governor at its head.

Since, in the Legislative Council, separate racial elections have been insisted on by the European community, it is clearly important to find out whether the same racial proportion is kept in the Civil Service, or whether that service is confined to Europeans. When we make enquiry in Fiji we find that an Indian candidate, however qualified, cannot get beyond a second grade clerkship; while junior Europeans, much inferior in capacity, at once take the higher grades. There is one notable exception on the Fijian side already mentioned of Ratu (Chief) Sukuna, who has been promoted to the rank of District Commissioner. Otherwise, the

racial barrier is rigid. No Indian could ever rise under present conditions.

Such is actually the constitutional position to-day as far as I have been able to study it. The same is true of Kenya. Sir A. Berriedale Keith is therefore right in pointing both to Fiji and Kenya as anomalies in the British constitutional system, wherein hitherto racial fairness has been regarded as a first postulate. Both these colonies have frankly and clumsily substituted racial supremacy and have carried it out in practice. They have not only insisted on a purely racial franchise, but have attempted as far as possible to make the Colonial Civil Service in its higher branches exclusive also.

Thus, although the principle of fairness to all races is still put forward by the Colonial Office, it is breaking down in practice. In Kenya, for instance, I was told that it was impossible to admit any Indian candidate, however qualified, into the higher branches of the Civil Service. The same, as far as Indians are concerned, has been the case in Fiji. I note again with great pleasure the peculiar exception of Ratu Sukuna on the Fijian side. But his case is the exception that proves the rule.

Naturally, I began to wonder how soon an Indian, born and bred in Fiji, would rise to the same post in the Civil Service as Ratu Sukuna. In New Zealand I found young Indian students of high character just completing the degree examination. My mind, then, went back to Dr. Lynch, a West Indian, who had been brought over in the way of promotion to be Chief Medical Officer in Fiji. Would any fully qualified Indian doctor be admitted into the Colonial Medical Service? Or would there be in future a possibility of

an Indian Inspector of Schools? When I was on the Gold Coast, in 1935, I found the Solicitor-General an African. Would an Indian be able to rise to that high office in Fiji?

Unless British rule in the colonies is to sink back to the low level of racial supremacy on the part of the British over all other races, instead of carrying out steadfastly its high principles of racial justice, these anomalies in Fiji and Kenya must be altered and the evil principle of racial dominance must not be allowed to spread further. There is a real danger of things gradually slipping back which were won with such splendid courage in England a century ago.



## *Chapter 13*

### THE TRAINING OF THE CHILD

#### (i)

THE rapid advance of Indian education in Fiji has been one of the chief causes of the improvement which I noticed on every side. Apart from the economic success of the sugar industry, it could not have produced such a good effect: for this has given the necessary finances. But both have worked together to make such a happy result.

It would be difficult to depict the miserable state of things in those earlier years before indenture was abolished. The crowds of ill-clad children that were always in evidence round the mills for the most part never went to school at all, but were allowed to run wild. The Mission schools, here and there, touched the surface of the problem. The C.S.R. Company provided school buildings near the mills. But the whole attitude of Government was supine.

In both my reports, I quoted most damaging figures showing what a small amount was spent on Indian education. But little notice was then taken of public opinion.

The Methodists and the Marist Brothers worked heroically under these impossible conditions. The work to be done was far too great for voluntary effort. The great change came after the abolition of indenture. This put heart into the Indian community and they began to realize in a wonderful manner that they could do things for themselves. At the same time, Govern-

ment awoke to its own responsibilities. The turning point came when Indians became aware of the advantages of the grant-in-aid system. They could found schools to teach not only their religion, but also Hindi and Urdu. The revival of Hindi came just in the nick of time. On the wave of enthusiasm which was thus created the new education movement was borne forward. Money was freely provided for new schools out of the hard earnings of the people themselves. Teachers with full qualifications were brought out from India and these taught not only the Hindi language, but also the religious precepts which the Indian villagers so highly valued. Young, ardent scholars from the Gurukula, Hardwar, offered their services and faced all the hardships of the journey. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha also employed its own teachers. The Muslims, who are comparatively few in number, took their share in providing for their own community.

Perhaps the greatest landmark of all was the full encouragement of Hindi as a medium of instruction in the junior classes. The help of Mr. A. Macmillan was very valuable in this direction; for he set up a standard of accurate Hindi among the teachers.

It would make a fine record, if someone who had lived through the last twenty years in Fiji, in the midst of Indian education, could record what happened in writing. My own knowledge is very fragmentary. I found everywhere on this last visit an atmosphere of hope. Though the number educated in the schools is low compared with the Fijian children, yet the advance made in so short a period gives every promise that the system now in force will in time cover the whole Indian community. The biggest gap at present is on the girls' side: for while 42 per cent of the boys

are already receiving primary education only 20 per cent of the girls go to school.

(ii)

I propose, in this chapter, to leave as far as possible statistics on one side and to put forward instead some general principles which appear to me to be of great importance for the future of Indian childhood in the colony. They may be of use in other colonies also.

First of all, I am quite certain that a fair standard of Hindi and Urdu should be maintained. If there is any district which is almost wholly Tamil by origin, there Tamil might be used as a medium, provided that it still remained the language of the home. All good educational principles point to the language of the home being the language of the primary school.

Secondly, it is essential to give time and thought and care in order to make the education which is offered suited to Fiji conditions, and not to those of Great Britain whence most of the textbooks come. The geography and history and romance of Fiji must be made the staple of education, not the names and dates of the kings and queens of England. With Indian children, Indian history, geography, and religious stories must have a special educational value.

Thirdly, the atmosphere of Fiji, its sunshine, its seas, its coral reefs, its hills and rivers—all these must have their proper place in education. School must *not* mean sitting in an ugly classroom all the while. In India, Tagore at Santiniketan insists on classes being held out of doors, not as an occasional thing, but every day whenever rain does not prevent it. We have also our holidays together with music and song, when we

come close to Nature. Thus all the beauty which Nature affords speaks to us of God.

Once more, religion, in the deepest sense of the word, must come into all education which is to touch the heart of Indian children: for they are essentially, by their very nature, religious. Every peasant in an Indian village speaks quite naturally in the familiar language of religion about God. To leave this out of education altogether is to leave out the soul and merely let the form remain.

(iii)

It has been a great achievement in Fiji to be able to allow the religious element to remain in so much of the education which is now being given in the islands. For the tendency on every side in New Zealand and Australia has been in the opposite direction.

It is true that there was some danger at first of religious rivalries springing up; but these tend to die down in the genial atmosphere of Fiji, and the vital thing, religion itself, remains. Even in the Government schools where special religious teaching, of a defined type, cannot be given, general lessons on religious and moral subjects of a non-controversial character ought to be allowed by the Education Board. Some quiet time in the school curriculum ought to be apportioned each day for silence and the strengthening of the inner life. A purely secular training would be a grave mistake with Indian children.

Along with a religious atmosphere should go music. There is a rhythm in Nature which Indian children feel perhaps more profoundly than others. Song should certainly be a part of every day's syllabus with the

younger boys and girls, especially at the kindergarten stage.

We really starve our children when we keep their eyes bent all day long upon the printed page. We have to do far more than that. We have to store up in their minds and bodies, during early childhood, all the music of God's wonderful world. We must do this before adolescence comes, when all too often the "glory and the gleam" depart and "fade into the light of common day."

Thus the joy of rhythmic play and song and country dance ought to be an integral part of every child's education, especially when we deal with Indian childhood. There are light and graceful rhythms and swaying movements which can be learnt from the old village plays common in India, and also in every country where childhood is lived in the open air and young life is full of active gladness.

(iv)

Out of all the different aspects of education I should undoubtedly choose the kindergarten stage as most important for Indian children in Fiji. These children have to face a dual life as they grow older—one in the home, the other in the world. Unless, therefore, their minds are unified by education, while they are very young, so that they have a mind and character of their own, they are sure to lack harmony in thought and character when they are adolescent. If this fate overtakes them, they will fail to advance steadily in later life. They will lead instead a kind of dual existence with a certain amount of cleverness, but with no single-hearted purpose leading on to great deeds.

Therefore, in Fiji, I should advise wherever possible

an infants' school building, in the same compound but separated by a space from the upper school, where tiny children between the ages of five and eight may express themselves in their own way with shouts and laughter and song and music, rather than remain silent and dumb while the attention is paid to the older children. Kindergarten work is one of the most exacting kinds of education when it is done properly; but in Fiji among tiny Indian children it will earn a great reward. Only teachers specially trained and taught will be able to perform this work thoroughly; and this means that the greatest care should be given to the training of infant school teachers in right method and ideal.

## (v)

It seems necessary in Fiji to divide the Indian girls from the boys as soon as ever the primary schoolwork is over. This division is agreed upon by every teacher. It means, however, a great difficulty in providing schools and teachers for the elder girls. Up to the age of ten co-education is possible. After that it is well to divide. The value of this girls' education in Fiji is in some ways as great as that of the kindergarten for infants. The difficulty of providing teachers has to be faced in a special manner, because the proportion of the sexes is still too low on the woman's side, and practically all the Indian girls are married at a very early age.

The Education Department will have to use considerable discretion and judgment for some years to come until this disproportion is relieved. They may have to find women teachers from the married Indians—women who have grown middle-aged and are free

to resume school work again because their own families are grown up. There will also be widows who are in need of earning their living and may be trained as teachers. Unless sources such as these are used, it will not be possible for some time to come to find an adequate staff of Indian women teachers.

Public opinion needs to be formed on this very important question of girls' education. For if schools and teachers are provided and good education is offered, it is not too much to say that more than half the problem of too early marriage for Indian girls is solved. For the Indian mother will be quite content to allow her daughter to continue at school if good teaching is provided. It is only when the mother does not know what to do with her daughter, after she has left the primary school, that the thought of early marriage enters.

If every class in Fiji realized under what a handicap Indian womanhood is still placed by a sex disproportion of only seventy-two women to every hundred men, I cannot doubt that a strong united effort would be made to overcome it in all kinds of ways by opening up vocational training for women as teachers.

(vi)

When I was in Fiji I was asked to give an address to the Women's Association, which included all races, and I pointed out that this work of encouraging girls' education demanded the united sympathy and support of every section of the community.

If any order came from headquarters to help the Government in any great emergency, such as a war, help would certainly be forthcoming. Yet here in Fiji itself a war is being waged to put an end to artificial

conditions, which have grown up out of the evils of the past and are not yet brought to an end. Only a united effort can gain the victory. Marvellous progress has been made in the past twenty years. It needs only one more supreme effort on behalf of girls' secondary education to win the day.

A further point needs to be made in this connexion. The new law raising the age of marriage will be much more easily enforced if it is accompanied immediately, on the part of the Administration, by an effort to provide more schools for girls who are just reaching the marriageable age. The fear of the parents concerning the new law, which raises the marriage age to fourteen, is not due to any dislike of the law itself, but simply to the fact that they fear some harm may come to their daughters if they have no school to go to. For this reason, more than any other, they wish them to get married early and settle down.

But if they were fully occupied and happy with school work, the parents would gladly postpone the marriage of their daughters to fifteen or sixteen. This was explained to me again and again by the parents themselves and I deeply sympathized with them.

From every point of view, therefore, the encouragement of Indians who have this whole matter at heart is essential. There should also be more power left in the parents' hands to control their children at this most difficult age.

Since the surplus in the budget has been growing each year, I can think of no more all round profitable way to spend a part of it than for Government to take in hand, in Suva and elsewhere, the provision of more schools, with a good working staff, for higher girls' education.



## *Chapter 14*

### THE FUTURE OF FIJI

#### (i)

WHAT then is to be the final outcome of this strange outpost of India in the South Pacific?

The rapidly increasing Indian community which was brought out here in emigrant ships from Calcutta and Madras has now settled down to a normal life, and has made Fiji its permanent home. Very few desire to return to India except on a visit to see their motherland and return. Very soon, with the exception of a few traders and merchants, who constantly travel backwards and forwards, every Indian in Fiji will learn to look upon these islands as the home country where he was born. In that sense, though not of course by race, he will be Fijian.

By ancestry he will still be Indian, looking back to India with all its great traditions. Indian history will be his own history. The ties of sentiment which attach him to India are likely to grow stronger, even while the actual knowledge and memory of India grow weaker. But all the time, year after year, his feet will be planted more firmly on the soil of Fiji as his permanent home.

#### (ii)

An analogy may be taken from New Zealand. My own two nephews, who were born and educated in New Zealand, speak of the land of their birth as their own country. "We, New Zealanders, think this or that," is

a phrase continually on their lips. But they are also proud of their mother country, England, where their ancestors were born. They will never forget that they are British, even though their first thought be given to New Zealand. Thus they have a deep, double loyalty.

In exactly the same way this Indian community in the South Pacific will develop a double loyalty of its own. Fiji will become its permanent home: India will be the country of its dreams.

The new loyalty to Fiji, by slow but sure degrees, will overshadow the old loyalty to India. The home and children will be altogether bound up with Fiji.

The Indian and Fijian people, who have both been acclimatized to the tropics, are bound to increase while the Europeans, who cannot well bear the climate, will decrease. For an unknown and indefinite period, the Government will still be European, but the subordinate posts will more and more be held by Indians and Fijians. In the large business and commercial houses, and also in the C.S.R. Company, the same will take place. It will be impossible to deny to those whose permanent homes are in Fiji, and who have received education in Fijian schools and colleges, a place in the administration of their own country. Racial prejudices will become less as time goes on.

(iii)

Probably changes like these will mean, in a certain measure, the gradual withdrawal of the white race (except from privileged positions) to those climates which are more congenial than Fiji. This has already happened in Mauritius, and the process will be the same.

There will be only one thing that may delay it, namely, the transformation of Fiji into a first-class naval station or a first-class air base. Both these will demand the presence of well-paid Europeans who have the highest technical skill in their professions.

(iv)

Fifty years ago, Australia and New Zealand were still called "colonies" and treated as such. They are now dominions, and the Statute of Westminster has given them their full independence. They are even able to choose, from their own citizens, the one whom they wish to be their Governor-General. Whatever ties of sentiment remain with the Crown, they are never forced. Indeed, they are all the stronger on that account.

A hundred years ago, it was still regarded as certain that the West Indies would always contain a large white population. At that time there was not a post of importance that was not held by the "white race." To-day the British have receded from all but the most important posts. The climate has gradually had its own way. The "white race" has employed its wonderful energies in trying to fill up the vast empty spaces in the temperate zone. There the British can live well. There they can thrive. There they can do their best work. There they can build up a home. Nature seems to be pointing her finger at the "white race" and saying, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further!"

The fact that the population of Great Britain shows signs of actual decrease, each year, in the near future, points in the same direction.

(v)

While I write these pages—as the R.M.S. *Naldera* makes her way up the Red Sea—each day has been a parable of much that this book has been trying to tell in so many words. In this trying climate of the Red Sea my brain will not work. Hardened as I am to the tropics, the damp heat has made me limp.

My companions at table are Indians, who are returning to Trinidad and Demerara after visiting India. Quite obviously they are not feeling the heat as I am. It means nothing to them, because their whole physique has been saturated with it for many generations. They seem even to enjoy it.

But when we reach the Northern climate, which they dread for its cold, I shall feel all my energy return. My brain will work again. It will mean new life.

(vi)

It is often argued that if the Englishman retires, everything will go back again. Haiti and Liberia will be mentioned. The condition of the British West Indies will be brought forward as already losing the place they occupied before. The same thing, it will be said, is likely to happen in Fiji.

But there are many economic reasons, besides the political retirement of the British from certain posts in the West Indies, which account for its present depression. There are also assets of no mean order which may be placed on the other side of the ledger. For instance, the harsh dominance of the “white race” has been removed, which is seen at its worst in South Africa; and there is an intense relief that human life has not

become tied up with the brutalities of the colour bar.

Yet it would be very wrong to deny that a certain lassitude occurs, adversely affecting the administration, when the tropical races return to the possession of their own islands. Heat does sap energy, however used to the climate these races may be. Life must necessarily run at a more leisurely pace than in the cold North.

I remember a stay in the Dutch East Indies, where the finely featured tropical races seem to have lost their ancestral culture and to be content to vegetate in a manner that comes near to animal existence. This was most noticeable in Celebes where the Dutch rule had hardly penetrated far into the interior. An almost complete equilibrium had been reached between man and his environment and Nature supplied food and shelter with the minimum of human exertion. The island is clearly in a back-water of human affairs. When one sees such islands of the "Lotus Eaters," then naturally one is inclined to say with Browning,

Then welcome each rebuff  
That makes each smoothness rough,

for it becomes quite clear that the very hardships of the cold North are bracing.

As the world gets smaller and as we get to know one another more closely, there must be found some better way for these tropical people to recover energy than that of perpetual conquest by a more virile race from the North. The process is so clumsy and wasteful and inhuman.

(vii)

Possibly the *via media* of the future will be found in the direction of annual migrations similar to the

flight of birds. For modern invention is just beginning to put into our hands new means of transit from one climate to another which may be soon as cheap as a short railway journey is to-day.

That which has hitherto been only possible for people living in luxury may be made soon accessible on a much more extended scale. Then, it might be easy for one born in Fiji, of whatever race, to recoup energy and return—still making Fiji his permanent home. This might be done by means of a journey which would not involve either prohibitive expense or a long period of time.

If this process were made cheap and speedy, then hard-worked administrators of whatever race might be able to restore the vigour they had lost and come back fresh to their work. Human life in that case, for the tropical races, would not inevitably fall back into the rut when left alone. It would be continually revived and renewed.

But the end of such a development should certainly not be used to make the dominance of the "white man" in the tropics more secure. It should lead, rather, to the creation of a new store of physical and mental energy in the tropical races, that should enable them to govern themselves. For it has to be constantly remembered that the tiller of the soil, who sticks close to the land, is the one who finally counts when all is said and done: and he will not be able to change his habitat by aviation.

(viii)

These subtle effects of climate upon human health and vigour are only just beginning to be explored in a scientific manner, and a vast number of experiments

will have to be made before we can obtain any final results.

Yet even now the great historical sequence is well known—the enfeeblement of the hardy white races, born and bred in the North, when they are obliged not only to live, but to bring up their families in the tropics. Equally well known is the extreme susceptibility to cold, which is always present, when a dweller in the tropics has to face a cold and sunless winter in the North. At the same time, it is also true that a cool summer in England may give health and vigour to one whose home is in the hot West Indies: and a winter in the sunshine of Egypt may save the life of one who has been attacked by the chills and chest diseases of the North.

(ix)

Let us face the final question. Does this mean, to ourselves in Great Britain, that we must use the wealth of the tropics for our own purposes and cling to them as our own “possessions”? Surely not, if we are true to the lessons of freedom which we have learnt at home. The greatest of all duties for England to-day is to devolve her responsibilities for administration upon those to whom they truly belong. She must abandon her whole conception of “Empire,” in the Roman sense of the word, and work out instead the far greater and nobler idea of a “Commonwealth.” This will mean a union of free and equal nations, wherein every race has equal privileges and equal responsibility, as a member of the one community: where every member is there by his own consent and no member is held in it by force.

But this can only be done by Great Britain handing

over, wherever possible, her present administration of the tropical colonies to those who belong to them by birth. Such a large design as this for the future is not to abandon Britain's heritage, but rather to preserve it. Is she willing to pay the price?

(x)

There is one still deeper thought that has been in my own mind all the while I have been writing this book. The Indian settlers in Fiji, as we have seen, have shown to the world in a very remarkable manner that the Hindu faith is a living religion with remarkable powers of recovery. They have also shown that its moral principles, which they have retained and renewed—the sanctity of marriage, the family life, the courtesy due to other races, the peace within which leads to gentleness and loving-kindness, the simple joy in children, the love of animals and of nature—that all these are singularly akin to our own Christian culture at its best and to the Sermon on the Mount.

Surely the first thought in the mind of any disciple who holds Christ in deepest reverence as the Way of his own life, must be to seek in His name to conserve these precious things and not to disparage them or to deny them: to help to build them up and not to cast them down. Christ, who welcomed the faith of the Roman centurion, would surely bid us welcome in His name the faith of these Hindus who have so bravely struggled out of the pit of adversity by the inner power of the spirit and also have welcomed so courteously as friends and neighbours the Fijian Christians who are learning themselves, in their own way, their lessons of moral goodness. There surely



need not be any ultimate clash between two peoples and two religions such as these. They will help and strengthen one another.

At the great international missionary Conference held at Jerusalem ten years ago, in April 1927, a united appeal was sent forth by those present, urging that the time had come for the living faiths of mankind to join together in withstanding the gathering forces of secularism that denied faith in God altogether and sought in the name of social progress to destroy it. This was no time, they urged, for dispute and controversy, but for a united front of all those who believed in God to meet the attack of those who did not.

I have seen growing up in Fiji between the two races—the Indian and the Fijian—a true tolerance of this kind: not a weak and feeble compromise, or a toning down of any vital principle, that, as Christians, we hold dearer than life, but rather a holding out of the right hand of fellowship to those who are seeking to live truly in the fear and love of God. According to the great word of the Apostle Paul,

Whatsoever things are true,  
Whatsoever things are honest,  
Whatsoever things are just,  
Whatsoever things are pure,  
Whatsoever things are lovely,  
Whatsoever things are of good report:

If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things . . . and the God of Peace shall be with you.

If in this spirit the missionaries, who have done such noble work among the Fijians, bringing the whole nation out of darkness into light, can now carry through

a still greater work of reconciliation and peace, preaching Christ crucified and risen, more by their lives than by their words, all may be well. They will find the Indian leaders, who are Hindus and Muslims, more than ready to meet them half-way. The natural instinct of religion, which is so deep in the Indian mind, will be preserved. It will also be attracted to all that is beautiful and true and good in the Christian faith. But if, on the other hand, the spirit of contention arises, then, in a small area like Fiji, it cannot easily be stilled.

I would also urge, at the same time, those who have always been my friends from the Gurukula, Hardwar; those with whom I have worked for so many years, that in choosing their men to go out, accompanied if possible by their wives as teachers, they should choose those who have the same peaceable spirit. I gave this advice to one whom I loved more than a brother, Swami Shraddhananda, and he was most careful in choosing those whom he sent out. I am sure that those who now have taken up his work will do the same.

(xi)

At certain moments when the true perspective becomes blurred, it seems to be of very little importance to write and think so much about a few thousands of people out there in the South Pacific, as compared with the many millions of India. But whenever such thoughts come they ought to be dismissed, because (as I have tried to show in this book) not only is the fate of the whole Fijian race involved in the trend which human relations will take in these islands during the next fifty years, but also their situation in the very heart

of the South Pacific gives them a singular importance of their own. The impression that Australia and New Zealand gain about India is chiefly based on the reports that reach their shores from the neighbouring Islands of Fiji.

## *Chapter 15*

### THE INDIAN DISPERSION

#### (i)

UP to the close of the last chapter the problems of the Indian settlers in Fiji have been discussed and their permanent place in the Pacific has been noted. But these are not by any means the only emigrants from India who have gone abroad and settled in the Pacific area. The Sikhs of the Punjab, a much-travelled race, have found their way to almost every port, not only in the Far East (at Hong Kong, Shanghai, etc.), but also on the American coast. They have spread to the Philippines and Hawaii. In many of these places I have met them and they have always given me the warmest welcome.

The Indian merchants in the Pacific have come mainly from Hyderabad, Sind, which is the one town in India that sends out far more emigrants than any other. The silk trade has attracted them to the Far East—especially to Japan. From Kobe and Yokohama, their stocks of the finest silks are replenished year after year, and they are then sold all over the world by the different branches of Pohomull Brothers, Assumal Brothers, and other well-known firms. I have found them, not only in every large town on the Pacific coast, but in places as far distant as Capetown, Panama, the Bermudas, and Port Said.

## (ii)

The largest "group" immigration into the Pacific area, next to Fiji, occurred in British Columbia early in the present century. The splendid climate and the high wages to be obtained for hard physical work attracted the sturdy Sikhs from the Punjab; and when once the stream of immigrants was started it was continued spontaneously without any recruiting.

Large numbers paid their own passage and went over, and it was estimated that between twelve and fifteen thousand had emigrated in the first ten years of the twentieth century. They were splendidly vigorous. Indeed it was their very efficiency as lumbermen in the heavy timber trade that first caused alarm among Europeans, who raised the cry of "white labour in danger." It was the time when the "White Australia" policy was being formulated, and for this and other reasons the demand for a "white labour" policy in British Columbia was taken up strongly by the State. In other parts of Canada, no objection was raised to Indian immigration, but only a few Sikhs went beyond British Columbia, and for this reason the struggle that ensued was confined to that State alone.

Then followed a shameful chapter in the recent history of the British Commonwealth. Relations between the Sikh immigrants and the rest of the population of the State became more and more strained. At certain places, up country, riots ensued, and some of those who had come from the Punjab were seriously injured and maltreated. Repressive legislation was passed preventing further immigration. By all manner of devices, laws and regulations were passed to prevent their passage across the Pacific. A

formula was at last drawn up, whereby it was enacted by law that no one would be allowed to land at Vancouver from India who had not completed a direct passage by a single steamer all the way from Calcutta. Since, at that time, no steamer traversed the whole of this sea route without a break, the law was equivalent to prohibition.

(iii)

Then a test case was made. A steamer, called the *Komagata Maru*, was chartered by a company of Sikhs, which should make the direct voyage to Vancouver. After long preparation, it arrived at the Pacific coast during the second year of the war. Rumours were spread abroad that the vessel had been paid for by German money and that it was being employed for "enemy purposes." There was no direct proof of this, but it became a popular cry at the time and the European crowd on the wharf was so threatening, when the *Komagata Maru* arrived, that no Sikh was allowed to land, and the vessel itself was kept away from the wharf-side in mid-stream.

Then a trial was held in the Courts, and some technical legal point was brought forward whereby a case against the new immigrants was made out. After this, under pressure of overwhelming force, the *Komagata Maru* was ordered back to Calcutta. The Sikhs on board were furious. On their arrival in the Hooghly, an outbreak occurred. Many of them landed and were starting to march up country when they were arrested. Some were released and others were put under trial and a "conspiracy case" was brought against them. Altogether, owing to the war fever and excitement of the times, the results of the incident were deplorable.

When I lived with the Sikhs in Vancouver, I heard what had happened from their point of view. The war panic of the times must be taken into account when judging the incident and its effects.

After this lamentable occurrence, all immigration from India into British Columbia was brought to an end. The number of Sikhs in Vancouver gradually dwindled; for they were not allowed to bring over any members of their family, and a home life was thus made impossible.

An effort was made, soon after the war, at different Imperial Conferences to get some relief by obtaining permission for those who possessed domicile rights in British Columbia to bring over their wives and children so that they might be able to live a proper family life. At first even this was refused, but after great difficulty it was granted. Yet, when the further claim was made that those who were permanent residents in British Columbia should have the franchise, this was disallowed. Even when the number of Sikhs had decreased to below a thousand, these full citizen rights were not given.

On two occasions I have visited this Sikh community in British Columbia, and have been much struck by the manner in which the religious life of the Khalsa has kept them together.\* They have won a high repute for industry and good character from those around them. In every other part of Canada the franchise has been granted; but, as I have mentioned, only a few Indians from India are resident in those provinces.

On the second occasion, my visit to Vancouver was

\*Khalsa is the name given to the Sikhs organized in a religious body.

made for the purpose of being with the poet, Rabin-dranath Tagore, who had been asked to lecture at a very important educational conference. He had on a previous occasion refused to set foot in Canada owing to the maltreatment of his fellow-countrymen; but he felt that he should go and meet the Canadians as fellow-men who were not responsible for the action of their Government. His generous spirit was rewarded by a wonderful reception, and at the last meeting of the Conference he received a truly great and quite spontaneous ovation. Nothing could have exceeded the kindness of the welcome from every one present. His international appeal for human good-will went home to the hearts of all. It was one of the greatest moral triumphs of his long life spent in the service of humanity.

(iv)

The plain and simple historical record concerning one of my own friends (a member of the Sikh community), who finally emigrated to the Pacific, may be told at this point, as an illustration of the wide range of the migration from India, which is all the while going forward to every part of the world, and has now touched every border of the Pacific.

His name was Anand Singh, and he came from Hyderabad, Sind. First of all, I stayed with him at Beira, in Portuguese East Africa, where I was his guest for several days. Then he accompanied me on my travels through Southern Rhodesia and I parted from him at Johannesburg, in the Transvaal. His business in the silk trade would not allow him to bring out his wife and children, as he could not keep a home for them. He asked my opinion and I strongly urged



him to change his station to one where he could have his wife and children with him and thus lead a family life. He had noble ideals and was a very devout religious man.

When he next came home on furlough, he brought his whole family to Santiniketan, in order to be under the influence of Rabindranath Tagore. While he was with us in our Asram, he made his final decision to give up his lucrative post at Beira and join his brother in the Philippines at Manila, where he was able to have his wife and children with him. He wrote to me continually from there, year after year, telling me his great happiness. Then, after some years, he died at Manila. Those last years with his wife and children, he wrote to me, were the best in his whole life.

A simple story like this illustrates in a vivid manner both the wandering propensity of many Indians, and also the great difficulty which they experience in making their homes in foreign countries. Yet in spite of the many obstacles, it is now estimated that at least 2,500,000 Indians are dispersed in different countries of the world to-day! It seems as though in the not far distant future the Indian people will become used to migration in a manner quite unimaginable a century ago.

(v)

In Japan, when Rabindranath Tagore was invited by the Japanese to visit their land, he stayed for some time with the Indian silk merchants who had established themselves at Kobe and Yokohama. They had formed a close bond of fellowship and showed a

remarkable power of adaptation to their new surroundings.

This corporate life was noticeable in every part of the Pacific, but most of all I found it at Sourabaya, in Java, in the Dutch East Indies. There an Indian leader (or captain) had been appointed by the Government who had considerable power entrusted to him of deciding the smaller disputes within the Indian community. The Chinese were treated in a similar manner. This system seemed to work very well indeed.

On the whole, I have been much impressed by the high regard with which the Indian community is held in the Pacific. They are peace-loving and law-abiding. In spite of many restrictions, they have been able to make their business flourish, and they have a good name for helping one another in any time of adversity.

In Australia, where the restriction of immigration is now prohibitive for any permanent residence, there are only a very small number of Indians—about two thousand in all. These all gained their right of domicile before the restrictive laws were passed. Such older citizens of Indian birth have the full franchise. Their children are regarded as Australians and go to the State schools.

In another chapter, the reciprocity treaty between India and Australia will be explained, which modifies in certain directions this harsh immigration law. It will be shown how students, merchants, and tourists have still the right of entry, but are not allowed to become permanent residents.

In New Zealand, the Australian situation has been more or less repeated. Indians who possess domicile rights number under one thousand; they are given

the franchise and all other privileges of citizenship. Both in Australia and New Zealand, when I met the Indian community, I was told by them that there were no disabilities, except the harsh restriction of immigration. One thing impressed me in New Zealand. Nearly the whole Indian community came from one district of Gujerat in Western India. In Fiji, the Gujeratis have migrated as shopkeepers, especially in the tailoring business. In Auckland and Wellington they are nearly all greengrocers and fruiterers.

In this chapter I have tried to picture, with some touches of detail, the varied life of Indians who have emigrated to different parts of the Pacific. The concluding pages of this book will deal with some of the larger problems of the same Pacific area in which India is specially interested as a nation.

## *Chapter 16*

### AUSTRALIA AND INDIA

#### (i)

I HAVE already mentioned the incident that occurred when the leading women of Australia took up the cause of the Indian indentured women on the sugar plantations of Fiji; how they sent out Miss Garnham to make an enquiry into the evils from which they suffered. This fact has done something to modify the bad impression caused by the "White Australia" policy. I have referred to this often in India and have added a further consideration, that this invidious restriction did one unexpected service, for which India to-day may be thankful. It stopped, at the outset, the importation of indentured labour from India into the tropical Northern territory on the very same conditions that it was sent to Fiji. Few things could have done more harm if once it had been allowed to take place than such an importation of indentured labour.

One old and wealthy Australian, in Adelaide, confessed to me quite frankly that in earlier years every effort had been made to introduce indentured labour, but it had been prohibited.

What struck me most forcibly, on this recent visit, was the effect of the blazing sunshine and burning heat at Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide upon character and temperament. In certain marked respects, Australia is nearer climatically to India than it is to Great Britain. As the Australian population occupies the less temperate regions, this will become

still more evident. For a large part of Australia lies in the tropical zone.

In the long run, the geographical factor will have to be taken into account most of all. It clearly proves that the Australian continent, with the adjacent island of Papua (or New Guinea), has a clearly marked relationship with the Asiatic East. Its outlook may lie in that direction.

As the years go by, subtle changes are certain to take place which will give what may be rightly called a new "orientation" to Australian life. Two examples will suffice to show this, though they might be multiplied.

(1) Even though the British in North Queensland may be able (owing chiefly to the absence of tropical diseases) to bear well the damp heat near the Equator, they will be obliged at the same time to change their mode of living.

(2) The dry heat of West Australia may be much more bearable than the damp heat of North Queensland; nevertheless, the brilliant sunshine, beating down day by day, is likely in the end to alter the temperament of West Australians even if they themselves are hardly conscious of it.

Politically also, the situation of Australia, so close to the Dutch East Indies, reveals the fact that its history will be bound up more and more with Eastern Asia and less with Europe. By its geological structure, as well as by its geographical position, it forms the last link in the long chain of islands which once formed an almost complete land barrier connecting it with Asia.

It is interesting to trace out this position of Australia by way of longitude. Perth, with its port of Fremantle, is only five degrees further East than Singapore.

Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is on the same longitude as Tokyo. The Malay Archipelago runs all along the north coast of Australia. When I last visited these parts, and embarked at Brisbane for Singapore, the steamer at no point in our long journey was far from land. But on my more recent tour when I came by way of the Panama Canal we remained for nearly three weeks in mid-ocean without any sight of land. The vastness of the Pacific deeply impressed me.

Another fact that came home to me was that Japan was by far the greatest maritime power of the Far East, with her chain of islands reaching downward in the direction of the Australian dominions. Throughout my whole journey, the problem of the Pacific and the future of Japan were continually discussed. What was happening in Europe had become strangely remote, even to my own mind, although I had just left it at a most critical time.

(ii)

The whole atmosphere of this continent of Australia has changed profoundly in comparison with what I can remember when I look back on my previous visit nearly twenty years ago. Then, the war in Europe naturally occupied everyone's attention; but on this visit, Japan was everywhere in the foreground of the picture. My time was taken up in answering eager questions about India and the Far East.

Just before I had reached Australia, an unfortunate controversy had arisen with Japan over the raising of import duties against Japanese rayon and cotton manufacture. This had been done in order to protect Lancashire trade; but it had seriously offended Japan.

A boycott of Australian wool had followed from the side of Japan, and a substitute for wool, made out of wood-fibre, was being tried out in Japanese workshops in order to make Japan more economically independent of Australia.

What interested me most deeply of all, as I came from the outside, was to notice how the younger generation in the Australian universities reacted to this dispute. There was no trace of the old "jingo" spirit, or any exclusive nationalism, but on the contrary an intense desire to maintain friendly relations and meet Japan more than half-way in the effort to make peace. It was evidently realized that Australia could no longer place reliance on the protection of the British Navy to help her in any quarrel. She must keep on good terms with Japan at all costs.

(iii)

India had come into the horizon of Young Australia mainly owing to "Imperial Airways" and the Dutch Air service. The importance of this new mode of rapid air transit had been quickly recognized. Young Australia is air-minded. India's position in the middle of the air route has proved to Australian statesman that the friendship of India is essential, if air developments of first rate importance in the near future are to be unimpeded. India stands with one hand, as it were, stretched out towards Europe and one hand stretched out towards Australia. It would hardly be too much to say that, in days to come, this "Imperial Airway" to Australia may become the greatest air route in the world. Thus, both towards India and Japan the highest interests of Australia point to a peaceful

and friendly attitude as alone consistent with national safety and progress. The experience of the disastrous results of the last World War, in which Australia took a notable part, has made her intensely anxious to have no share in any other.

(iv)

A more recent factor has opened the eyes of Young Australia, and I was able to watch the result. The civil war in Spain has served to show how precarious is Great Britain's commanding position in the Mediterranean Sea. It has become clear that in such narrow waters the air forces of the Mediterranean powers are likely to play a dominating part. The regular weekly ocean mail services, via the Suez Canal, may at any time be interrupted. For this reason, other sea routes must now be opened out and the air-way across India must be jealously preserved. The passage round the Cape for ocean steamers is likely to become more carefully considered as an alternative sea journey. But, most of all, the necessity is felt to keep that "life-line" intact by air which unites Great Britain with Australia by way of Karachi, Allahabad, and Calcutta.

(v)

An important question was frequently put to me, in this connexion, by the more thoughtful students of the Australian universities. If Japan (they asked) by a sudden change of policy cultivated the friendship of China and India, and thus, by a kind of Monroe Doctrine, became the protector of the East against



Europe might not such a protectorate be used, not only against the Europeans in the treaty ports of China, but also against Great Britain in India, and against Holland in the Dutch East Indies? If such a dominating leadership by Japan occurred, Australia's position in South-eastern Asia might prove even more dangerously isolated than before. Behind all this, therefore, the question was put before me, whether it would not be possible to forestall Japan by winning the sympathy and friendship of India, before it became too late. Could not the younger generation in India and Australia find much in common, if only it were possible for them to meet in some natural manner instead of standing aloof?

Such questionings as these seemed to show me that Young Australia was becoming dissatisfied with the blank exclusionist policy of the past, which might be summed up in the two words, "White Australia." While the restriction of immigration is still regarded as sacrosanct and necessary for economic reasons, the importance of not offending the East on racial grounds is now better understood than before. Also, the contact with Indian troops during the war has made Indians held in high regard, as comrades in arms. Australians and Indians fought side by side on many occasions and learnt to respect one another.

As a matter of fact, both Australians and New Zealanders are singularly free from the strong instinctive colour prejudice which has so deeply infected the Anglo-Saxon race in South Africa and in the United States of America. The kindly treatment of the Maori race in New Zealand is an example of this; and the Indians and Chinese, who have domicile rights in Australia, speak highly of their equal treatment.

Indian university students, who have travelled from Bombay, on the P. and O. steamers, have often told me that they have noticed with pleasure the freedom from race and colour prejudice on the part of the Australians as compared with the strong sense of it among the "Anglo-Indian" passengers who travel home from India and the Far East. For this reason, they prefer the "Australian" boat to the "China" boat, which calls at Bombay on the alternate weeks.

The argument has often been put forward that if there were closer contact between the Australians and the coloured races, the same prejudice would develop. The history of the early settler days in Australia last century seems to bear this out. Those in Australia who recognize the weaknesses of their own people maintain that for this very reason the present arrangement of closely restricted immigration should not be disturbed. While individual experiments might be made, experience would tell strongly against any mass migration from India into the vacant spaces of North Australia.

(vi)

At the present moment, the number of Indians who entered Australia before the barrier was put up is so small as to be insignificant. But while mass migration from India would be inadvisable, there are certain commitments which Australia and New Zealand undertook, at the time when the Reciprocity Agreement was signed; and these have never yet been carried out. It may be well to explain the character of that Agreement, which has been strangely lost sight of in recent years.

At the Imperial Conference, held in London soon after the World War, a generous acknowledgement was made of the part which Indian troops, numbering over a million combatants, had given to the Allied cause. It was urged that India's status, as a dependency, was unsatisfactory and that everything should be done to raise that status as soon as possible. The Dominions of Australia and New Zealand, through their representatives, expressed their sympathy with any practical proposal. It was agreed, therefore, to raise the status of Indians in Australasia who possessed the right of domicile, so that it might be equal to that of all other residents in the dominions. It should be noted that, on this point, South Africa alone demurred: Canada asked for some delay.

Then followed a Reciprocity Agreement, which every dominion, including South Africa, signed along with India. It stated that each dominion, along with India itself, had the right to determine the composition of its own population. In this manner the economic basis of the "White Australia" policy was safeguarded. This was a big concession on India's part, because it was obvious that India would never be called upon to restrict any mass migration to India from Australia, since none would take place.

At the same time a codicil was added, that visits from students, tourists, and merchants would be allowed, for purpose of *temporary* residence. This codicil took away any direct racial stigma against Indians: but unfortunately, as far as Australia was concerned, no attempt whatever was made to implement it and no Indian student has gone from India to any Australian university.

In the last year of the World War, before the

Reciprocity Agreement was signed, I went round to all the universities of the southern continent in order to find out if there would be any obstacle in the way of such students from India being admitted. The result of this enquiry was entirely satisfactory. The Governing Body in each university gave me every encouragement to go forward with the subject. But the war suddenly came to an end. The submarine menace in the Mediterranean Sea was over. At once, the rush of Indian students to London, Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, and Edinburgh began all over again, and it has continued ever since.

Therefore, the opportunity, which the war presented, of "trying out" this Australian experiment was brought to an untimely end. But one of the chief practical reasons against the working of the scheme in those earlier days was the fact that the Government of India refused to recognize any other than British university degrees for all the civil and professional services. Above all, the Australian medical degree at that time was not yet recognized as sufficient to allow medical practice in India.

But this obstacle has now been removed, both from the services and the professions. The time is soon likely to come back again when this whole question of the admission of students from India into Australia and New Zealand will be revived. In anticipation of this, I have ventured to approach once more the leaders of public opinion, both in the universities and churches, and have again found out that public sentiment is entirely in favour of such an experiment being tried, which might lead on to cultural friendship.

(vii)

In an important book, recently published in Australia by eminent men, who are members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Dr. Clunies Ross, the Editor, devotes a considerable portion of his own essay to "cultural contacts."\* He shows very conclusively that immense benefit has accrued both to China and the United States owing to an act of wisdom on the part of the latter. At the conclusion of the Boxer Rising in China, the Boxer Indemnity (which China paid to the United States) was employed entirely for the promotion of closer cultural relations between America and China. Bursaries were given at the leading American universities to provide for the expenses of poor Chinese students. In this way, over a period of twenty years, the leading men of the younger generation in China have owed a debt to America, as their intellectual home, which can never be repaid. The statesmen at Nanking, who have struggled to maintain a civil government in action, are for the most part American-trained.

It should not be impossible, in the same manner, to promote excellent cultural relations between India and Australia. This would in no way infringe on the "White Australia" policy, because such students would return to India at the end of their course.

Dr. Clunies Ross writes as follows concerning Japan: "It would be an act, not only of courtesy and good-will, but also of practical foresight, if the Australian Government would establish a number of scholarships to be held in Australia by Japanese

\* *Australia and the Far East*. Published by Angus Robertson & Co., Sydney, Australia.

graduates (and particularly agricultural graduates) to enable them to become thoroughly acquainted with Australian agricultural and pastoral practices."

If cultural relations with India were considered favourably from the same standpoint, a great deal might be done, even in a single generation, to remove from the minds of educated Indians some of the wrong interpretations which they have been inclined to put upon the "White Australia" policy.

"The relations," Dr. Clunies Ross adds, "of Japan and Australia, in the past have been hampered on the one side by ignorance and on the other by a lack of interest. That such apathy and ignorance are not conducive to the growth of commercial relations is only too apparent, while, inherent in this lack of understanding, lie the germs of any diplomatic complications likely to arise between them.

"We are of opinion that the extension of cultural contacts along the lines indicated must not only benefit their commercial relations but also demonstrate that the supposed conflict of interests between the two countries has no foundation in fact. What is no longer excusable on Australia's part is a lack of policy in her relations with the Far East in general and with Japan in particular."\*

(viii)

Every word which has been written in this passage concerning Japan could be written with even greater force about India.

With regard to university education, the editor of this important book writes, "It is highly desirable on every count that the School of Oriental Studies at

\* Page 201.

Sydney and similar activities at Melbourne should be expanded to meet the needs of the growing importance of Australia's relations with the Far East. In addition to courses in Oriental History, special courses of study in economics and modern Japanese and Chinese political history should be provided. . . . The opportunity should be taken to press for the establishment of some reciprocal system whereby the exchange of at least one occupant of an Australian Chair or lectureship, preferably in History, Economics, Public Administration, or Agriculture, should be effected with a Japanese scholar of similar standing. Steps should be taken to establish Australian research fellowships in Oriental studies." I have slightly abbreviated these passages for want of space. In the book itself from which I have quoted more than ten pages are given to this subject, which reveals its great importance in the eyes of the writer. It is necessary to add that India, being Australia's closest and most intimate neighbour, might well come under the same scheme for consideration. For India, China, and Japan are linked together by common intellectual and spiritual bonds, which the Buddhist Movement, starting from India more than two thousand years ago, made durable. The closer relation of India to Australia would affect the whole of the Far East. If however, on account of any increasing reluctance on the part of Great Britain, India's freedom is denied, and Australia is made a partner with Great Britain in holding India in subjection, the repercussions of this will assuredly run through all the corridors of the Far East and awaken echoes there which will be hostile to Australia. On the other hand, if the right hand of friendship is held out, and it is known all over the East that Australia

is on the side of Indian freedom, then the response of good-will and friendship will not be from India only, but from Japan and China also. For, in spite of innumerable divisions and differences, the East in its fundamental sentiments holds together as a unit of the human race.

(ix)

One further word needs to be added concerning a hasty action on the part of Australia at the time of the Peace Treaty which has never been forgotten in the East. With incredible short-sightedness, Australia stood out, all alone, against the insertion of a clause in the Preamble of the League asserting the principle of racial equality. Instead of safeguarding, as it would have been quite possible to do, her economic policy of restricted immigration, Australia gratuitously insulted Japan and other Eastern people by refusing to recognize the equality *principle*, which was far more vital to them than any question of emigration. But if Young Australia is determined to cultivate friendship towards the Eastern peoples, who are close neighbours, there could be no more gracious act than for Australian representatives to propose at Geneva that racial equality should be clearly recognized in the revised constitution of the League.



## *Chapter 17*

### THE PROBLEM OF THE TROPICS

#### (i)

WHILE I was engaged in studying the conditions in Fiji, my attention was constantly drawn to the influence of the tropical climate and its enervating effects upon the Europeans who had made their home in Suva. The children were clearly unable to face the heat in the same way as Indian and Fijian children, and a lassitude came over the adults who stayed there without a change. On the other hand, the Fijian and Indian children evidently enjoyed the climate and found all their energy brought out by it.

Since this is a factor of first-rate importance in human history, which goes on steadily reproducing its effect on each generation in turn, it may be well to study it more closely in relation to this area of the Pacific, in which Indians have now found their permanent home. For both Fiji and India itself are, in the main, tropical countries, unsuited for the permanent residence of the European. The problem has already come before us in these pages; what is now required is to summarize some of the results that have already been brought to our notice.

In India, during the hot-weather months, before the downpour of the Monsoon, the climate becomes so trying that those who can afford to do so seek a cooler region. Perhaps it is even more trying during the damp heat which follows the Monsoon. It has been found that an active and energetic life is rendered for most

people difficult. They feel the effects of the climate in such a way that any physical or mental strain becomes a burden. The average length of human life is shorter than in the temperate regions.

On account of this continual drain on vital energy, invasions of India from the colder mountainous regions of the North have been frequent in the past. Indian history is full of them. But these invaders, in ancient times, themselves succumbed to the enervating climate when they settled down in it. Their conquests, therefore, were transitory in character. For their dynasties soon came to an end. This was the fate of the Moghul conquerors at the time when the British arrived.

(ii)

The conquest of these tropical and semi-tropical lands by the hardier races has not merely affected the history of India. It has proved an almost invariable factor hitherto in the annals of mankind. Yet, obviously, if humanity is to be moulded into one social structure, and internecine wars are to be brought to an end, there must be found some means whereby the weaker races shall not always be a prey for the strong. For that is the way back to the jungle.

The majority of so-called "colonial possessions" which are subject to the European powers lie in the tropics. The hot, steamy "rain belt" (as it is called) on either side of the Equator, is able to produce vast supplies of rubber, vegetable oil, cotton, sugar, and also in favoured districts contains minerals and petroleum. These are the very things which the powerful nations of Europe have learnt to require in large quantities, when they get ready to make war on one

another. Therefore the tropics have been brought, as it were, right into the "war zone." Their possession is regarded as a special mark of imperial strength.

In times past, their conquest brought with it such a heavy death-roll, owing to both disease and bad climate, that in spite of their commercial and political importance few men were willing to pass all their lives in exile among them. But the scientific discoveries of the last half-century have overcome some of these earlier disadvantages. Immunity from tropical diseases has made rapid strides in recent years. Accelerated transport by sea and air has brought the colder climates very much nearer. Other improvements, such as "cool-air-conditioning" in the hot weather, are being tried out with success. Life has thus become much more tolerable for a foreigner. In my own experience, since the beginning of the present century, the changes made have been astonishing. At present, they are only available at a great cost; but in time they may become accessible to the multitude.

These scientific improvements may be rightly put down to the credit of the West; nevertheless their immediate effect has been almost entirely to promote the continuance of the present economic exploitation of the tropics by commercial firms backed by foreign capital. Herein lies a humanitarian as well as a political issue of the first importance, which has not yet been solved.

(iii)

As far as the past is concerned, no European power has a clean record. The course which Spain and Portugal pursued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was continued by the Netherlands, France,

and Britain in the eighteenth. The slave trade itself formed one of the chief sources of commercial profit and speculation. For more than a century the merchants from Bristol and Liverpool were engaged in the transport of slaves across the "middle passage" from Africa to British Guiana and the West Indies. It was therefore all the more remarkable, as a purely unselfish act of statemanship, when the British Parliament took the leading part in the Abolition of Slavery in 1833. The time was one of economic depression following upon the ravages of the Napoleonic Wars; nevertheless, a large indemnity was paid in order to get rid of the evil, once and for all, throughout the British colonies. Such an act encourages the hope that further unselfishness, of the same kind, may be possible in order to set free the weaker races of mankind.

After the discoveries made by Livingstone and others in Central Africa, a new "scramble" began among the European powers for further territory in that vast continent. To-day, we look back with a sense of shame and regret on account of the way in which this "scramble" was carried through. Our shame increases when we watch Italy pursuing a similar policy in Abyssinia at this late hour in the day. But this recent action of Italy only proves that the tropical regions of the earth are bound to be conquered and exploited unless they are protected by the general consent of mankind. In the past, while there were still uninhabited tracts of jungle and forest, trodden only by the wild beasts, there was room for foreigners and adventurers. But to place under alien rule lands already densely populated, in order to extract from them rich products for imperial and military purposes, is an outrage upon human nature. The family of

mankind must surely grow out of this stage, or else "sink back into the beast."

(iv)

In recent years, we have become painfully aware that the international anarchy, which led to the World War of 1914-1918, was in a great measure caused by this rivalry of the European powers seeking to gain "possessions" in these tropical regions. It has also become self-evident that unless some remedy is found, this rivalry is likely to begin all over again and lead to even more disastrous results. For the dispossessed people in the tropics have begun to revolt against any further domination. Whether in Indo-China, or the Dutch East Indies, or India, or Africa, or the Pacific, the recent history of each region tells the same tale. The World War laid bare, once and for all, Europe's greed. The conscience of the East was outraged by what it saw. Therefore it is almost inconceivable that the very same economic exploitation of the tropics should begin all over again. Human nature will not stand it. The subjugated peoples will never be dragged into another European War.

Recently I received a letter from an Indian Christian whose admiration and friendship for the West are both of long standing. "Since the failure of Europe," he wrote, "to deal with Italy effectively and stop her use of poison gas in Abyssinia, the last shred of our moral respect for the West has vanished."

Directly after the war, these subject peoples of the world looked up to the League of Nations as pointing the way to their deliverance. President Wilson's speeches concerning "self-determination" were taken

very seriously indeed and representatives flocked to Versailles and Geneva in eager expectation that their countries were to receive their emancipation. They were bitterly disappointed; for they were not even given a hearing. From that time forward, the League itself has fallen into disrepute, because it has only seemed to take count of the imperialist powers which held these other countries in bondage.

- India at first appeared to be made an exception to this Geneva attitude of aloofness. She was given a place as a nation in the League, or Society, of Nations. But very rapidly it was found that this admission to full membership did not function, since her own vote in the League Assembly was merely placed at the disposal of Great Britain. Owing to this patent fact, the disappointment with the League has been more bitter in India than in any other subject country.
- Suspicion there has also become more deep-seated.

(v)

When Sir Samuel Hoare had spoken strongly at Geneva in September 1935, I talked the matter over with an Indian friend and told him how thankful I was for that last part of his speech, in which he recognized at last that some powers, like Great Britain, had a super-abundance of raw materials in their tropical colonies, while others, like Italy, had not. It was an acknowledgment on the part of Great Britain which might lead very far. When I had spoken, I was surprised at first to receive no answer from my friend. There was no sign of a cordial acceptance of the position I had stated, such as I had expected from him. I challenged him. His answer showed me

at once an obvious reaction which I ought to have anticipated.

"Don't you see?" he replied. "Great Britain is only talking of dividing her own spoils with the younger bandit powers. She is offering to buy off Italy with part of her own booty."

This was a realistic way of looking at things that was painfully transparent from *his* point of view when once it was stated. If I had been a member of a subject nation, I should have felt very much as he did, and I blamed myself for not having noticed this aspect of the case before. For all the subject countries have watched what has seemed to them the moral cowardice of the League. While every sacred pledge had been broken by Italy, as one of its leading members, this weakness in action has been contrasted with the immediately decisive steps taken wherever the smaller powers in Europe are concerned. It has been pointed out that a big nation, such as Japan or Italy or Germany, can snap its fingers at the League and transgress against the Covenant with impunity, while a smaller power, such as Bulgaria, is forced at once to obey the League's dictation.

The reason given for this in India is cynical. It is said that the other imperialist powers have themselves committed similar acts of aggression so often, when seizing their own colonies, that they have had a guilty conscience when they were called upon to prevent Italy from doing the same thing.

If only the League of Nations could be separated from its confining shell of the Treaty of Versailles and could then take up this whole issue of the tropics in a courageous manner, it might still be possible to revive an interest in it among the sullen and dis-

satisfied countries of the East. If, at the same time, a World Economic Conference could be summoned—preferably at Washington—which might deal directly with the relationship between the tropical countries and the Great Powers in their economic sphere—then, at such a conference, the voice of Africa and Asia could be heard and the future of their territories considered. The dispossessed and subject countries might then make their appeal against injustice.

(vi)

It will easily be seen how intimately the tropical colonies in the Pacific and elsewhere are involved in this question. The fate of India is bound up with it in the same manner. For it is becoming clearer every day that her internal weakness is in a great measure • due to her enervating climate. In the clash of brute forces, this weakness must prove her undoing; and this is likely to happen, in spite of all her efforts to uphold the banner of her freedom, unless the world intervenes.

There also remains unredressed the refusal, at the Peace Conference, in 1919, which I have already mentioned, to recognize specifically the equality of nations within the League which directly affects India and all countries situated within the tropics. This is by no means a point of merely academic importance; for as long as it is refused by Australia, or any other people, it serves to keep up the evil inheritance of race and colour prejudice, which civilized man must outgrow if humanity is ever to be brought together into one true Society of Nations. At Geneva itself, the time is fully ripe for such a step forward. It is true that the League has functioned



hitherto on the assumption of racial equality. But since this basis of the League has been challenged and the principle itself has been refused, the matter cannot be left in abeyance. The issue must be cleared, once and for all, when the League Constitution is revised.

## *Chapter 18*

### INDIA, CHINA, AND JAPAN

#### (i)

THE increasing alarm in Australia at the sudden rise of Japan to imperial power has often been referred to in this volume. Indeed, it has become, as I have related, the common talk of the South Pacific. Australia faces this new fact with its own thin population and begins to understand at last that a merely negative policy will not be sufficient.

This new alignment of interests in the Pacific has brought Japan into the very centre of the map. India and China also stand over against Australia with their own teeming populations; and even though there is no desire to spill over into the Southern Continent, there is a heart-burning not easy to appease whenever the words "White Australia" are flung across the ocean: for they are taken to imply the inferiority of the coloured races. It is surely to the advantage of Australia therefore to follow the precept of the Sermon on the Mount and to seek to agree with her adversaries quickly while she is "in the way with them."

Japan's own relation to India at the present time is difficult to define. In many respects there is a similarity between India and China, due on the one hand to their vast rural populations and on the other hand to their helplessness from the military standpoint of Japan. Again, while India and China are huge countries, with a very small industrial development, Japan is a compact nation of small area, highly

industrialized, and of immense military and naval strength.

India's sympathies are largely with the Chinese. For her people feel with ever increasing bitterness their helpless dependence upon the foreign power of Great Britain. Therefore, when Japan seeks to humiliate and overawe China by brute force, they see in that unfortunate country a fellow sufferer that has experienced along with themselves the growing evils of subjection.

This aspect of the situation has to be clearly understood by anyone who attempts to follow what is happening in the East to-day. Yet, at the same time, if taken alone, such a definition is far too simple; for there are bewildering changes of policy in all three countries, which need to be carefully noted.

First of all, there has been a "communist" revolution in the interior of China, differing in many ways from what has happened in Soviet Russia, yet continually looking in that direction for its inspiration. This revolutionary movement appeals to the younger generation in India far more forcibly than the central Government at Nanking, under Chiang-kai-Shek. In the struggle between the Chinese communists and Chiang-kai-Shek, the sympathies of Young India have been mainly with the former.

(ii)

In the second place, reports have constantly reached India that the Nanking administration has been receiving support from the British residents in Shanghai, who have immense financial interests at stake and are watching with very great anxiety each political move.

No definite charge is brought forward, but rumours and suspicions of this kind have a wide currency in the East, when once they are started; and in India to-day whatever is done by Great Britain is immediately suspect.

Therefore it is not in any way surprising that rumours of this kind have caused Young India to look askance at what is happening to-day in Nanking. At the same time, by one of those strange cross-currents of thought, Indians continue to keep fresh in their memories the resounding victories of Japan over the navy and armies of the Czar. For that was the very first defeat of the West. The thought of Japanese heroism before Port Arthur, or in the straits of Tshushima, stirs the blood and renews the hope that at some not far distant future Japan's embattled host may strike a similar blow against European prestige. For, historically, the tide began to turn from that critical moment when the small kingdom of Japan defeated Russia under the Czar. No other nation in Asia could stand up to the West in naval and military might in that manner.

Yet, so complex is the situation, that at the very moment when the hearts of the younger generation in India are stirred most by these memories of the past, in favour of Japan, they are chilled by her attitude of fierce and almost fanatical hostility against Soviet Russia. The latter power, with its centre at Moscow, has a peculiar attraction for Young India, which is fully aware that the Soviet Republics now face the gravest danger of an attack on either frontier. Nazi Germany has declared its intention of expanding into Russian territory from the West. Japan has equally shown her hostility in the Far East. A virtual alliance

between these two dictatorships appears now to have been concluded. So Young India helplessly watches this crisis drawing nearer, and in such an impending conflict her heart goes out towards Soviet Russia and her secret sympathy with Japan is stifled.

It will be seen that a confusion of thought has arisen which cannot easily be resolved. For while the desire is great to see the Western European powers, such as France and Britain, receding from Asia, the desire is becoming almost equally strong to favour Soviet Russia in its struggle against Japan.

Racially, however, Young India's sympathies are still largely with Japan in her strong demand for equality with the Western powers. For instance, the action recently taken by Japan at the London Naval Conference, in refusing at all costs to accept an inferior naval ratio offered by Great Britain and the United States of America, greatly impressed the whole of the Far East. It was an unmistakable gesture which sent a thrill through Asia, hardly less deep, perhaps, than that caused by the victories of Japan over the Czar at the beginning of the twentieth century. I have been long enough in the East to note the repercussions in both instances, and the elation felt was the same. It was taken as another sign of the turning of the tide. Japan had clearly "come of age" and there was a great rejoicing over the event in Asia. What happened needs some further elucidation.

(iii)

Very few of those who stay at home in Europe, or who think in terms of the Mediterranean and Atlantic, realize the amazing expansion of Japan in the Pacific

Ocean during recent years. Only those who travel constantly in the Far East are able fully to appreciate it. Her shipyards are working night and day to build new vessels. Her mercantile marine is seriously competing with that of Great Britain and the United States of America in every port of the world. In addition to the trade of the Pacific Ocean, Japanese ships are to be found now in large numbers at Singapore, Colombo, Calcutta, Rangoon, and Bombay, and also along the coast of East Africa at Mombasa, Beira, Lourenço Marques, and Durban. A new trade route has also been opened up via Capetown to Buenos Aires. Added to this, for a long time past, direct communication has been established with every port of Europe and North America.

While this rapid increase of material things and the equally rapid growth of population, which has accompanied it, are both driving Japan forward along the same road as the Western powers, it is impossible not to feel saddened at the jettisoning of much that made her ancient civilization beautiful even in the smallest detail. This abandonment of the old culture has been effected in order to put the whole nation on a war footing. Everything else has been sacrificed to that end. Even the cruel weapon of assassination has been used against those statesmen who represent the large financial interests. For the army in Japan is drawn from the agricultural population, which is opposed in every way to the vast modern growth of the great cities and yet at the same time desires expansion abroad. There, at Tokyo and Osaka, the wealth has become more and more accumulated in a few hands, and all the latest luxuries of the modern West have been introduced along with it. The young officers in

the army and navy, who live a Spartan life and come from the poverty-stricken countryside, believe with a desperate and fanatical intensity, which is prepared for martyrdom, in the heroic ideals of old Japan. They look upon the present capitalist regime as altogether degenerate and long to return to their own ancient Japanese virtues. Yet they are dependent even for their military expansion in Northern Asia on this very concentration of Big Finance which they hate. They cannot therefore free themselves from it.

(iv)

"Their ideas," writes Emil Leiderer, "are inconsistent and purely emotional—they fight against the capitalist system but defend the same system against the socialists: their emotional violence is unloosed whenever the situation seems to require it, and when necessary they are temporarily curbed by the military authorities. The part these young officers play in politics can hardly be over-estimated. . . . The general creed is one of optimism, with the people firm in their belief that they have been chosen for special glory from among all the peoples of the world. To be sure, this faith has been buttressed by the strongest, best disciplined, and best equipped army in Asia, and recently by many lucky chances and narrow escapes. But the important fact remains that Japan believes in her luck, believes in miracles, believes, for example, that the world has offered her an incomparable opportunity for building up a giant industry, extending her production, increasing her exports, accumulating capital abroad, and strengthening her political influence in China almost to the point of complete dominance."

Emil Leiderer speaks with authority owing to his intimate knowledge of Japan and his appreciation of the noble qualities which have made Japan great. As a visiting professor of the Imperial University of Tokyo, he has had abundant opportunities of studying very closely each side of this intricate problem. There is still a possibility that the present administration in Japan may be overthrown from within, and that, in this way, an agrarian revolution may bring much more nearly together the down-trodden peasantry all over the Far East.

(v)

It will be seen that the deductions which are to be drawn from this chapter tend to waver from right to left; for the conflicting issues are as yet unresolved. Nevertheless, some big crisis, such as a new world war, would immediately precipitate them.

India is not in the same mood to-day as she was in August 1914. In some way or other, she will make her own decision; she will not allow Great Britain to decide for her. So far, perhaps, it is possible to speak with some assurance. But what that decision will be and on which side she will stand are still very uncertain. The signs are everywhere becoming ominous that the world forces may more and more be divided along the two extreme lines of Fascism and Communism. If such a direction is taken, it is hard to make any forecast as to the course which each country will pursue. If the two great democratic Anglo-Saxon powers can remain neutral, along with the Scandinavian peoples, India may not become involved; but such a neutrality is likely to become very unstable when once war has begun.



(vi)

It may be asked whether the signs are not apparent that Japan aims at including India as well as China within her "sphere of influence." If therefore Great Britain prematurely retires and leaves India to manage her own affairs, would not the same course of events be likely to ensue which is happening to-day in China? There might follow, it is said, a breaking up of India herself into different warring factions, including a bitter internecine struggle between Muslims and Hindus. There would also accompany it most probably a fatal lack of preparation for either military or naval defence. Thus the conquest of India by a power as strong as Japan would not be difficult; and in the end the new suzerainty might prove far more irksome than the comparatively mild yoke of Great Britain.

Those who believe that military, naval, and air forces are the only final arbiters in this world, as society is constituted in our times, constantly represent the problem of Indian independence in this manner. They point to the impotence of the League of Nations, to the vast rearmament of Germany, to the immense potency of bombing from the air. These hard, brutal facts, they declare with emphasis, cannot be ignored.

(vii)

Strangely enough, at first sight, the counter-realism of Young India appears to be very little disturbed by considerations of this kind. It does not actually fear Japan. Its eyes are intent upon Soviet Russia and it has passed on from the immediate political interests to those which are mainly economic. It has even tended

to leave aside the flaming passion of Nationalism, which has run like a vast conflagration throughout the whole of the East in recent years. A new warcry is being raised. For the stark, cruel hunger in the Indian villages is now being made the chief ground of appeal, and class-consciousness among the poorest of the poor is being aroused in each province in turn. Thus the economic issue of poverty is likely to be made the one driving force in the near future.

Young India declares that as the misery caused by hunger bites deeper into the lives of the countless millions of China and India, the vast power that is latent in it, in the mass, may induce Japan to reconsider her military doctrine that only might is right. Great Britain, also—so these young realists assert—will have to take account, whether her own attitude is not tainted by the same evil of *Macht-politik* as Japan and Italy. For these two new imperial powers are doing exactly the same thing that Britain did a hundred years ago. Great Britain, they say, used her gun-boats then, in order to compel submission, just as Italy has been using air-bombing now. There has been no difference in the method: the only difference has been that Italy has begun its own imperialistic career a century later.

(viii)

In these few sentences I have endeavoured rapidly to put forward Young India's statement of the case. With its attempt to champion the poor against the evil effects of the whole capitalist system, I have the profoundest sympathy: indeed, it represents my own position. For there can be no doubt that the poor in the villages of India are suffering terribly from an oppres-

sion which the British power has hitherto been entirely unable either to modify or relieve. My own opinion, for what it is worth, is this, that the range of poverty of a grinding character, driving millions of human beings far below the level of subsistence, is increasing in modern times. Therefore my heart is wholly with those who defend and uphold the poor against the rich and powerful.

But Young India, while putting forward its own remedy, is now being tempted more and more every day to lay aside the final principles of *Ahimsa* (Non-Violence) in the struggle which is so obviously impending; and here I cannot follow, but have to draw aside. For if this vital moral factor is abandoned, and a naked class war is provoked, then the appeal to hate and brute violence is certain to predominate over everything else. The struggle will become only another form of Might seeking to gain ascendancy at any cost. The end would then be held to justify the means, and in this way the wheel of human suffering would come round again full circle.

(ix)

To summarize, then, the main purport of this chapter, which actually has direct relation to one third of the human race,\* India and China are two vast countries with an agricultural population, where, among the masses of the common people, the mind for countless generations past has been set on peace, and the profession of a soldier has never been held as above that

\* The population of India and China, taken together, must number over 800,000,000 souls. Thus, at a very moderate estimate, it represents one-third of mankind.

of learning and culture. Their main modern problem, also, is one and the same, namely, how to provide food and clothing for those densely crowded areas of population along the great river beds, where the average density often reaches the congestion of over one thousand human beings per square mile. .

These two countries represent, each in its own way, a civilization which goes back further than any other culture that has survived the destructive ravages of time. Their ancient wisdom, at a very early date, had made brute force a thing to be abhorred and not encouraged. The human mind, in both of them, was set on peace. They represent, therefore, even to-day, a stabilizing and peaceful influence in the midst of powers which seem bent on violent aggression. But their new and younger generation may be provoked at last to adopt methods of violence if the present imperialist plunder of territory continues. Only as Great Britain is prepared to leave aside her former acquisitive policy and is ready to appeal boldly to these deeper instincts of mankind, which abhor brute force and violence, will she be able to take her true place in the Council of the Nations and guarantee, with a clear conscience, her own definite refusal to use war as an instrument of national policy. Only in this way will Great Britain be able to dissociate herself from the recent actions of Italy and Japan. If thus she is really able and willing to stand out, with sincerity of purpose, against aggression and is prepared at the same time to show by concrete actions that she is anxious to surrender the power which she had wrongfully appropriated in the past, then, even at this eleventh hour, she may regain some of the respect which she has lost among the peoples of the East. She may be

able rapidly and effectively to carry through large constitutional changes in India and elsewhere. But if she is to do this, she must show herself eager, both *in India and other countries, to promote the cause of freedom and independence which the people themselves demand.*

For the hour has surely arrived when, as a Nation, Great Britain must decide at last that she cannot and ought not to attempt to "serve God and Mammon" at the same time. She must not any longer invoke the Moral Law of the Universe on behalf of her own cause, while clinging desperately to every portion of an empire gained in a great measure through the processes of war which she has now abandoned. The sovereign test will always be whether she is ready to enlarge the bounds of human freedom wherever it is possible to do so.

(x)

Nearly a century ago, British statesmen were face to face with a revolt in Canada, which seemed at one time not unlikely to take the same direction as the secession of the American colonies. A new policy had to be worked out towards each of the great "colonies" (as they were then called) in turn. The wonderful prescience of Lord Durham set the line of statesmanship truly. Canada became a dominion within a British Commonwealth of Nations. With many vicissitudes, which seemed often to presage disaster, still further steps were taken. One by one the new dominions gained their independence. The last of these have been South Africa and the Irish Free State.

To-day Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Irish Free State are, to all intents and

purposes, separate and independent nations, with a great future before them. No force or compulsion could possibly be used, or would even be thought of, if any of them finally decided to secede or retire.

Are British statesmen ready to take further steps concerning other regions where force was originally used as a means of conquest in the past, and there was no settlement of a British emigrant population? The largest of these is India, with its vast non-European population. It is widely believed by Indians themselves that, in the end, Great Britain will never give way to anything else but force. No mere protestations are likely to remove that opinion. Only decisive actions, which cannot possibly be mistaken, will do so. For we have come to the parting of the ways. Neither in India, Africa, or China, nor in any colonial sphere, can things be done to-day such as were done with impunity twenty or thirty years ago. The whole attitude of the rest of the world towards Europe is very rapidly and decisively changing; and Great Britain's prestige has suffered along with the rest. Even deep-seated habits of peaceful sufferance under aggression, which were prevalent last century, may be distorted into active, violent revolution.

## *Chapter 19*

### INDIA'S PLACE IN THE PACIFIC

#### (i)

THOUGH India's very extensive sea-coast offers only a very few harbours for the use of commerce, yet those that do exist, such as Bombay and Calcutta, are among the most crowded with shipping in the East. India's exports and imports are immense: for her population is immense also.

If India from the first, in modern times, had been given an entirely free hand to build up her own mercantile marine, according to her own need, its volume might already have exceeded even that of Japan; but the British occupation made it inevitable that British ships should do most of the carrying trade and this has resulted in the postponement of the initiative required for building Indian ships in Indian shipyards.

In the Bay of Bengal, both at the mouth of the Hooghly and in the area of the new harbour at Vizagapatam, there are to be found in abundance, near at hand, the three requisites for successful ship-building operations on a large scale—(i) coal; (ii) iron; (iii) a plentiful supply of labour. The great Tata Iron and Steel Works are quite near at Jamshedpur. The technical skill and business enterprise are to be found. It is therefore likely that in the course of time a great ship-building industry, of first-rate national importance, might be established in this region.

## (ii)

This would not imply that India, like Japan, would set out on a career of naval conquest, building up battleships of her own. Even at the greatest period of Indian expansion in the Far East, from 400 B.C. to A.D. 800, the weapons of violence seem to have been very little used. This at least is the picture, as far as ancient history, with its monuments, records it. The expansion was cultural, not military. So also it is likely to be in the future. But expansion is certain to take place, owing to the extraordinarily rapid growth of population.

At the last census, in 1931, it was found that nearly thirty-four million human beings had been added to the population of India in the previous ten years. The forecast for the year 1941 shows even more alarming figures; for the estimate points to a probability that the four hundred million mark will be reached. Already there are over three hundred and eighty million people! Such figures are colossal, and the overflow must soon take its course in one direction or another.

At one time it was thought that East Africa might receive a large Indian population, but that expectation is never likely to be fulfilled. The nearer regions, such as Assam, Burma, Malaya, Ceylon, have already been filled up almost to the point of saturation. When we look further afield the prospects are not encouraging. The Dutch East Indies have already their own population problem in Java, which is clearly becoming overcrowded. Borneo and New Guinea appear on the surface to present large areas for immigration, but those who have studied the question do not hold out



hopes for much room in those directions. The same may probably be stated about the North-western territory of Australia, even if the initial difficulty, connected with the "White Australia" policy, could be surmounted. But, apart from that policy, it seems to have been clearly proved that the weather conditions are not favourable for the support of a large indigenous and permanent population in those regions.

(iii)

What then, it may be asked, is to happen to these overcrowded alluvial areas in India and China in the near future, when the excess of population becomes even greater than it is at present?

We have already seen that the trend of this overflow hitherto has been towards Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Already nearly eight millions from China and two millions from India have filled up these intervening spaces of South-eastern Asia: and it speaks well for the agricultural villagers of both peoples that no racial clash on any large scale has yet occurred. There is practically no inter-marriage, up to the present, as far as I have been able to ascertain; but it is difficult to speak about the future. The trade interests do not seem to overlap. In the field of labour the Chinese prefer to do the heavy work for which they are more physically fitted. In all the many journeys which I have made along these shores bordering on the Pacific and Indian Oceans I have never found any marked hostility, racial or economic, between the Indians and Chinese. They get on well together.

There is one vast area in the tropics that still remains practically unoccupied, to which this surging overflow

might be directed—Brazil. Japan has already marked out an area in the less tropical portion of Brazil for her own imperial use, and she has replenished it with an admirably planned colonization. China and India, as they spread across the world, are not as yet likely to organize their emigration on such an elaborate scale as Japan. But necessity may soon compel them to take some necessary steps before it is too late. Therefore, the occupation of the tropical plains of the Amazon valley in Brazil, which stretch out for many hundreds of miles, may at no distant date be attempted by these prolific races of Asia. For they cling to the soil and are inured to the heat of the tropics. Also, they can bear even the evervating climate of the rain belt near the Equator. In the long run, these plains of Brazil must find inhabitants who can cultivate them. The South American Amazon tribes, who now wander over them, cannot possibly be regarded as future settlers on any large scale, or over any wide area.

If these well-watered areas, where rice can be grown in abundance, had bordered on the Pacific, it is likely that they would have been occupied from Asia long ago. But the precipitous ridges of the Andes, coming down quite close to the Pacific Ocean, have shut them off with impenetrable barriers, and this obstacle has kept them hitherto almost untouched and virgin soil.

(iv)

Culturally, the spiritual force still latent in India is likely once more to spread rapidly eastward, as soon as ever the present concentration on material development gives way to the deeper things of the soul. For

here, undoubtedly, India has a treasure which is by no means yet expended. The Christian culture, also, that has now had its cross-fertilization on Indian soil, is likely to blossom and bear fruit in China, just as early Buddhism did in the days gone by. Some of the greatest thinkers of modern times have already prophesied such a development. Bishop Westcott pointed out that the mind of India had always been formative in the Far East. *This prospect was also before the poet, Rabindranath Tagore.* It made him undertake pioneering journeys and endure incredible hardships of travel in spite of ill-health, even in his old age. The effect of these is becoming visible to-day.

How difficult it is for one who is born in the West to appreciate fully these new currents of human aspiration, I know from my own experience. For the West has become almost incorrigibly Europe centred. It is apt to regard Europe alone as the source of all development in the regions of the mind. Yet we have seen, from many angles, how the Pacific Ocean, with its long sea borders and its numberless islands, is likely to become at no distant date the centre of fresh prospects for all mankind; and in this process of the ages, India, with its intellectual and spiritual background, will have an important part to play.

## *Chapter 20*

### EUROPE AND ASIA

#### (i)

A STILL further widening of the subject is needed in this last chapter, if the picture which I wish to draw in outline is to be made complete. For behind all that I have been writing concerning India and the tropics, and the new world history which is being made before our eyes in the Pacific, there lies all the while an immemorial conflict between Asia and Europe which springs up like a volcano into renewed activity from age to age.

Asia reaches down, with its vast, congested populations, towards the Equator: Europe reaches upwards towards the Arctic Circle. Soviet Russia extends along the frontiers of both, half in Asia, half in Europe, the greatest phenomenon and portent of our times.

Out of Asia have gone, at the end of different cycles of human history, mysterious impulses from the world of spirit, which have startled and transformed the West: out of Europe have gone mighty conquerors, possessing huge material forces, which have penetrated the furthest corners of the East. Great advances and equally great retreats on either side have been made, with alternate ebb and flow, like the tides of the ocean.

Once, at least, the power that swept over Europe and India alike, from the northern steppes, was not spiritual at all, but brutal and barbarous in the extreme. For in the Dark Ages the same barbarian

hordes swept down upon the civilized world in East and West alike with equally destructive effects. On the other hand, the greatest of all advances from the side of the East was made when Christ was born. It was wrought in the human heart by one pure Faith which came forth, clear as crystal, like a fountain of living water, and replenished with new life the Graeco-Roman world.

The Western penetration of the East, on the other hand, which began last century, wrought miracles of transformation through Science and Invention. But its driving power was material rather than spiritual, and its results were a mingling of good and evil together. Everywhere, its greatest momentum seems now to have reached its limit, and a new situation stares us in the face. Since the outbreak of the European War, with its internecine madness, the long period of Western expansion in the East has begun to draw to its close. The tide from the West to the East has already changed its current; and imperceptibly, but surely, the cyclic movement has set in from the East westward once more.

(ii)

Let us think out further, for a moment, what was happening in pre-war times. Europe, throughout the nineteenth century, had made almost uninterrupted advances over Africa and Asia. Nothing seemed able to stop this onward flow of the tide. Even Japan submitted for a time to the intellectual leadership of the West. She copied European methods in almost every particular. Thus the *mind* of Europe was still in the

ascendant and made its influence felt in every corner of the globe.

At the beginning of the twentieth century this conquest seemed almost complete. So overwhelming was the spell of it, that even priceless treasures of art were thrown aside to make way for the modern science of the West. I have seen this vandalism in Japan and China and also in India itself. Never before had such a powerful tidal wave from the West swept over the East. Each landmark of the past seemed submerged and overwhelmed by the advancing flood.

But the Great War brought a change. At its commencement, Asia was still under the intellectual dominance of Europe. The watchwords of the West—democracy, freedom—still rang true in Eastern ears. Even the war itself was welcomed, at the first, as a war to make the world safe for democracy. It was expected to bring to the subject peoples the right of self-determination. A passionate expectation arose all over the East that out of the sufferings endured in the war, vast changes would come about such as might at last relax the grip of Europe on the other races and bring about a harmony of East and West on equal terms.

While these were the main thoughts of Indian leaders and statesmen, as they went through the misery which the war brought with it, they soon encountered the gross self-seeking of the victorious powers even before the long struggle was ended. Moral respect for the Allied powers vanished when they saw the humiliations involved in the Treaties of Versailles, Trianon, and Sèvres. Above all they were shocked by the refusal, even in the League of Nations, to recognize racial equality between the West and the

East, or to fulfil the promises made to Eastern peoples.

They watched the sinister intervention of the Allied powers in a stricken Russia on behalf of the vested interests of the old regime. From that time forward, the self-seeking aims of the West were open and unashamed, and the East revolted against them. Young India became fascinated for a time by the ideas underlying the Soviet Administration. It was noted by everyone that in that region of the earth the colour bar had been finally abolished.

This one fact of the entire absence of racialism and colour prejudice within the Soviet Republics made such a deep impression upon the younger educated leaders in India that they swept aside every other consideration and began to study with supreme attraction the thoughts and ideas that reached them from Moscow. They have thus divided off entirely, in their thoughts, the Soviet Republics from the West and have learnt to regard them as the heralds of a new Asia. The fact that the vast northern plains of Asia are coming more and more to be the chief sphere of new developments in the area of these Republics makes this "orientation" of the Soviet experiment more and more certain to them.

(iii)

All that I have written concerning the turning of the tide in the East away from Western Europe is borne out by Tagore himself in a famous passage where he refers to his own experience.

"When I was very young," he writes, "we were all full of admiration for Europe, with its high civilization and its vast scientific progress: and especially for

England, through her glorious literature, which had brought a new inspiration into our young lives. . . . We believed, with all our simple faith, that even if we rebelled against foreign rule we should have the sympathy of the West with us. We felt that England was on our side, wishing us freedom.

"But there came a rude awakening. . . . During the twentieth century, and especially since the European War, Europe's unscrupulous exploitation seems to have increased. Those who live in England, away from the East, have now got to recognize that Europe has completely lost her former moral prestige in Asia. For Europe, this is a great moral defeat that has happened. Even though Asia is still physically weak she can now afford to look down on Europe where before she looked up. This carries with it tragic possibilities of long-continued conflict."

- Now that the tide has actually turned away from Europe, since the conclusion of the war, the momentum behind it is certain to increase year by year. For when once the spell is broken and the moral prestige is gone, the revulsion of feeling is likely to gather power until it sweeps over the whole continent.

Asia still contains a population which is far in excess of that of Europe. There is also a much older civilization everywhere apparent. She is the "mother" continent of mankind. The U.S.S.R., with its complete freedom from race and colour prejudice, stands astride of both continents as a loosely connecting bond. Its contact with Asia is geographical as well as spiritual. Under the new enthusiasm which has been created it is likely to prove an effective solvent of many despotisms in Asia far beyond its own borders. Certainly, among the younger generation some of the leading



ideas of the U.S.S.R. have been gaining ground to a remarkable degree. These new conceptions of human society have gripped the mind of youth and made it face the awful poverty of rural India. The younger leaders have been turning away from the somewhat barren field of modern politics, where a stalemate has now been registered, and have determined at last to neglect no longer the terribly hard realities of Indian village life with its misery and want. They are thinking in concrete terms of revolutionary changes in land tenure and the release of the peasants from the crushing burden of debt.

In face of the alliance of the British Administration with every vested interest and its support of the Indian princes, it has become difficult indeed to convince the younger generation that the heart of England is sound. For there is no trust left in verbal promises and the new Indian Constitution is looked upon with disdain and contempt. In many quarters the opinion has gained ground that the whole British system of administration throughout the world is undermined and tottering to a fall: that British statesmen are ready to stoop to any compromise or subterfuge in order to avoid danger. Thus the constant professions of peace are often attributed to fear.

(iv)

In India, while setting forward without hesitation my own conviction that human freedom is more loved and honoured in Great Britain than in any other country in Europe, I have often brought forward the well-established record of the Abolition of Slavery, when Great Britain performed one of the most wholly

unselfish acts in her own history. The cost, at the time, was enormous and the times were bad. She had to face the economic ruin of her colonies. But she acted throughout on idealist lines and succeeded.

The question has immediately been raised in return "Would England repeat that experiment to-day? Would she set India free, even if it meant a great economic disadvantage to herself?"

*I have invariably answered, "Yes, her own people would, if they were convinced of the justice of the case. But it is more difficult to speak for politicians. The heart of England is still sound."*

Here usually the argument ends. But the question itself reveals the only possible line of approach to bridge over the widening gulf between the two countries. Nothing but some outstanding deed on behalf of the oppressed will now persuade the East that Great Britain still holds fast to the freedom which made her moral greatness in the past. There are those in India who would be ready to revise their present judgment if such a sacrifice were made.

But such a sacrifice itself will be judged by the manner in which the West acknowledges openly the signs of the times and accepts the fact that the day of her material supremacy is over, and that true friendship with the East, to be worthy of the name, can only exist on moral grounds and on equal terms. For England merely to make a pretence of giving India liberty is the one way to provoke the crisis which each country seeks to avoid.

(v)

With such a state of tension in India, the treatment of Indian settlers in the Pacific and in other parts of the

world is made a subject of paramount concern. Incidents such as that of the *Komagata Maru* in Vancouver or the threat to deprive Indians of their franchise in Fiji are events of major importance with regard to which Young India is profoundly interested and watchful. Again and again, in recent times, indignation has blazed up in India itself because of some treatment of Indians as inferior in South Africa or Kenya or Zanzibar. The struggle for freedom and independence in India cannot be separated for a moment from the struggle that is always going on in the most distant colony where Indians are domiciled. A victory over there is a victory for India itself. A defeat, on the other hand, brings with it the deepest sense of humiliation.

For this reason, among others, it has been a great happiness to me that, in Fiji at least, things on the whole have gone well, and a disaster of the first magnitude, such as the deprivation of the franchise would have been, has been avoided. My own supreme hope has always been, and still is, that the freedom which every Englishman has inherited as a birthright will be handed on to others.

## *Appendix A*

### THE FIJI CENSUS REPORT

THE new Census Report of 1936 has reached me after this book was written, just in time to add a postscript on it which has considerable importance. It bears out almost exactly the provisional figures which were sent to me in Australia soon after I had left Fiji.

The Fijians now number 97,651. This shows that after the terrible epidemic of 1918-1919, when their numbers sank to 82,500, there has been a steady rise. But until quite recently the annual increase has not been so rapid as that shown by the Indian community.

The Indians now number 85,002. During the twenty years since indenture was abolished, there has been no fresh immigration on a large scale. Indeed, the number of Indians coming and going has been very nearly equal. The numbers, therefore, cancel out and do not make the figures shown in any way abnormal. The only interesting point to notice is that the newcomers are either from Gujerat or the Punjab.

The epidemic of 1918-1919 struck the Indian community, but not so badly as the Fijians. The latter lost so heavily that in a single year their numbers were reduced from 91,000 to about 82,500. This was the lowest figure ever recorded for the Fijian race. There was, therefore, a very serious alarm lest the decline should go still further. If the Indian indentured labourers had been still coming in, the Fijians might have lost heart and "race suicide" might have taken place. But the abolition of indenture put heart into the Fijians, and they soon began to increase again in numbers.

The Indians, owing to the epidemic of 1918-1919, only decreased from 62,700 to 59,800. Thus at the beginning

of 1920, after the epidemic, the Indian population was 22,700 below that of the Fijian. Now, by a fairly normal increase the Indians are 12,649 below the Fijian total. They have made up 10,000 in sixteen years.

Two factors are helping forward this rapid growth of the Indian population.

(a) The number of female births, since indenture was stopped, has very rapidly risen. Nature herself has been adjusting the original disproportion. In the last fifteen years the percentage has risen from 65 to 72 per hundred males.

(b) The infantile mortality among Indian children is low. This is due to the careful nurture of the children and the abundance of pure milk in Fiji.

The Indian population table reads as follows :

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1881	588	388	200
1891	7,468	4,998	2,470
1901	17,105	11,353	5,782
1911	40,268	27,073	14,213
1921	60,634	37,015	23,619
1936	85,002	48,246	36,756

It will be noticed how rapidly the female side increased after indenture was over. At the same time it is equally clear that the proportion is still below the normal. Therefore it is likely that the Indian figures during the next ten years will show a larger increase on the female side than on the male. The fact of this rapid increase on the female side accounts for the high rate of advance in the Indian population. The low infant mortality will also tell in the same direction. If, however, the greater care now being taken by the Fijian mothers in the nurture of their children has its full effect the Fijian advance in population may be more rapid also.

The Fijian numbers read as follows :

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>
1881 . . . . .	114,758
1905 . . . . .	87,000
1917 . . . . .	91,000
1919 (after the epidemic) .	82,500
1936 . . . . .	97,651

The following figures show the main racial heads in 1921 and 1936:

	1921	1936	<i>Percentage of population</i>	<i>Increase on 1921</i>
Fijians . . . . .	84,475	97,651	49·2	+ 13,176
Indians . . . . .	60,634	85,002	42·8	+ 24,368
Europeans . . . . .	3,878	4,028	2·0	+ 150
Mixed Descent . . . . .	2,781	4,574	2·3	+ 1,793
Chinese . . . . .	901	1,751	0·8	+ 841
Other Islanders . . . . .	4,295	5,169	2·6	+ 874

It should be noticed that if all Polynesians are included the Pacific Islander population is 102,820.

At the 1921 census 26,810 Indians were shown as born in Fiji. In 1936 this number had increased to 60,856.

The composition of the Indian population is still somewhat abnormal in two directions: (i) The sex ratio is much too low on the female side. (ii) Since the original indentured immigration was *adult*, and very few children came out with their parents, the number of elderly people is also disproportionate at the present time. But these irregularities will all be set right in the next twenty years.

One more table may be given, which shows the total population of Fiji (including all races) at each census:

1881 . . . . .	127,486
1891 . . . . .	121,180
1901 . . . . .	120,124

1911 . . . .	139,541
1921 . . . .	157,266
1936 . . . .	198,379

Since the Fiji Islands are for the most part extremely fertile and well watered it would be quite easy for them to support a much larger population.

## *Appendix B*

### TAGORE AND CHINA

THE father of Rabindranath Tagore, called Maharshi because of his saintly character, took a profound interest in China and made a voyage to that country when it was a rare thing for an Indian who was a Brahmin to take such a step. Rabindranath Tagore followed in his father's footsteps and visited China on two occasions. He pleaded for a renewal of the ancient cultural friendship between China and his own country. His words did not fall on deaf ears. Quite recently, as a result of an exchange of visits and a long correspondence, the Chinese educated classes have raised a large subscription and have themselves built a Hall of Chinese Learning in the midst of the Poet's Asram at Santiniketan. A very large library of Chinese books is attached to the Hall, and a Professor of Chinese Literature is now a part of the Staff of the University. Chinese students come over to India in order to learn Sanskrit, and a plan has been formed whereby Indian students may be enabled to go for study to China. To Tagore himself this has been a profound satisfaction, and at the opening ceremony he sent his thanks and good wishes to the Chinese nation. The importance of this new development has been recognized all over India.





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